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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates workplace learning for new and established leaders in an English primary school. The study uses an ethnographic linguistic approach to explore the workplace learning environment and develops a conceptual framework that examines boundary construction, performance spaces and genres of organizational talk. This framework draws on Hernes (2003) to assess organizational boundaries, sociological and psychological concepts which take account of space and a Bakhtinian theory of language to understand genres. Using this framework the study investigates the way that the five formal leaders of a 350 pupil semi-rural primary school are able to learn to lead as part of their working lives. The methods used included interviews, participant observation, concept mapping, group discussions and attendance at the INSET training days and management team meetings taking place within the school. The study took place over one school year (September to July).

The study illuminates the ways in which learning to lead was dominated by the local environment. Planned learning within the school was related to the organizational concerns of the headteacher and her perceptions of vulnerability and risk associated with opening the boundaries around and within the school. The school was assessed as having a restrictive learning environment, using Fuller and Unwin's (2003) expansive – restrictive continuum, but this planned strategy by the headteacher aimed to ensure that fast, immersive learning could take place. Use of a limited range of genres of organizational talk also shaped the way in which learning took place, privileging process knowledge (Eraut 2004). The thesis proposes that boundaries, spaces and genres need to be considered together when considering the workplace as a learning environment.

**Boundaries, spaces and dialogue: learning to  
lead in an English primary school**

**Ann Elizabeth Pegg**

**BA (Hons) Applied Social Studies, CQSW**

**MA in Education (Lifelong Learning)**

**MSc. Educational Research Methods**

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**Doctorate in Philosophy**

**Centre for Research in Education and Educational  
Technology**

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## **Acronyms**

BLP	Building Learning Power
CLs	Curriculum Leaders
Fast Track	Fast Track for Teachers
IEPs	Individual Education Plans
INSET	In Service Education and Training
LftM	Leading from the Middle
LPSH	Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NQTs	Newly Qualified Teachers
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
SMT	Senior Management Team
TAs	Teaching Assistants

## **Chapter 1**

### **Workplace learning - individual experience in a social world**

This thesis investigates workplace learning for new and established leaders in an English primary school. The study uses an ethnographic linguistic approach to explore the workplace learning environment and develops a conceptual framework that examines boundary construction, performance spaces and genres of organizational talk. This framework draws on Hernes (2003) to assess organizational boundaries, sociological and psychological concepts which take account of space and a Bakhtinian theory of language to understand genres. Using this framework the study investigates the way that the five formal leaders of a 350 pupil semi-rural primary school are able to learn to lead as part of their working lives. The methods used included participant observation, attendance at the INSET training days and management team meetings taking place within the school, concept mapping, group discussions and interviews. The study took place over one school year (September to July).

Investigating educational leadership through learning at work brings together two broad areas of research which become connected at the point of leadership development. What is striking about both the workplace learning and the educational leadership literature is the current emphasis on 'horizontal' notions of learning (learning as an expansive, boundary crossing and socially connective activity) as the preferred method for facilitating both individual and organizational learning. For individuals this implies an exposure to different people and different working environments; for organizations an increased connectivity with the external environment through partnering and an open systems approach. Exactly how

boundary crossing works as a pedagogic device that facilitates this expansive learning is not yet fully understood. There are a number of questions that need to be explored which concern the nature of knowledge, how it is transferred across boundaries and who might be implicated in this process. One suggestion is that knowledge is embedded within workplace practice and is transferable between people, moved between organizations through the embodiment of ideas and practices as individuals spread 'best practice'. An alternative possibility is that knowledge is transferred through embodiment but reconstructed anew through the languages and practices in each setting, generating local variability and change. It seems though that we do not yet fully understand how learning takes place through boundary crossing and what the implications might be for individuals and organizations. This thesis explores the way that boundary crossing and dialogue shape the possibilities for learning at work through investigating the nature of this experience for new and established leaders in a primary school.

The study investigates learning for leadership from an organizational and personal perspective that foregrounds the workplace as a domain of learning. Having said that, the workplace is a domain within which individuals interact and learn both together and individually, and learning cannot be contained within one particular setting. I adopt Evans et al.'s (2006:9) approach here as I think about learning '*in, through, and for the workplace*' as the focus of the study, but inevitably some learning is '*for*' the individual, their interests and career aims, and some learning takes place outside the setting, through formal learning activities elsewhere or in other domains of family or community. Where participants mentioned these issues they were taken into account, but the school as a workplace set the limits of the investigation. Taking the workplace as the focus of attention meshed well with the National College for School Leadership's view that '*most leadership learning takes place in school, while doing the job, through engaging actively in leadership*

*practice.*'(NCSL 2004:1) and with the recent emphasis placed on coaching and placements within other schools as pedagogic devices for learning to lead (further discussed in chapter 4).

Taking an organizational approach that focuses on workplace learning allowed me to draw on a range of issues that are not always brought together in the field of leadership learning in education. The institutional features of the school as an organization are often taken for granted and become the 'context', 'category' or background for discussions about leadership and leadership learning rather than being considered as an environment which may or may not facilitate particular types of learning or leadership. Billett (2006) argues that the workplace constitutes a curriculum with particular '*social practices that afford experiences to participate and learn*' (2006:45). Affordances (the support and opportunities for learning) are shaped by the way that organizations reproduce themselves, power relations within and between organizations and the motivations and intentions of individual learners. In schools this approach changes our view of a curriculum from an object that is delivered (to children) by teachers to something that that workers experience. This helps to focus attention on the whole workplace as a learning environment for adults and to consider the relationship between the local workplace and national policies for the development of school leaders.

The intended focus of the learning, *leading*, draws attention to issues of power and authority in the workplace. Leadership models proposed in the educational research literature often contrast the '*power of one*' (Harris 2003:14) with other more collegiate, shared or distributed models of power, and the PricewaterhouseCoopers Independent Study into School Leadership (2007) notes that the traditional, individualistic, model of leadership dominates in the primary sector. PWC go on to say that:

*'This model, while historically appropriate, is likely to lead to tension given the changing school environment. It is unlikely that, given the current workload levels reported by heads, that this model will be sustainable in the future unless substantial changes are made to the school organisation through workforce remodelling.'*

(PWC 2007:87)

Learning to lead means considering how leadership models and models of power are enacted in the workplace and considering the new ideas about leadership currently being discussed. The traditional model of sole headteacher is no longer the only option and there are different models for different schools with different institutional characteristics (Discussed further in chapter 4; Hallinger 2003; Southworth 2002).

Finally, whilst taking an organizational approach to leadership learning in the workplace, the turn to linguistics in organizational research (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000) meant that I was able to include a theory of language in my study.

Methodologically, language is commonly treated as transparent and interviews as an unproblematic source of information about leadership and learning. Taking a Bakhtinian approach to linguistics helped me to develop a conceptual framework to investigate learning for leadership as situated within the workplace and constructed through the particular physical, social and discursive characteristics of the institution.

A number of questions about learning to lead had emerged from both this organizational perspective and the workplace learning literature which resonated with my personal experience of attending and delivering training sessions in the workplace (of schools and other educational environments). Specifically, there were difficulties that I, and others, seemed to encounter in following through with 'good ideas', with changes in workplace practices and initiatives. This difficulty, the variable impact of training and learning for individuals and groups in the workplace, is of concern to policy makers, educational researchers, professionals in the field

and workers trying to improve their effectiveness. The rhetoric of learning through boundary crossing, discussion, sharing good practice and networking seems to imply that change for an institution involved in these practices will be both swift and non-problematic, yet we know from the literature that implementing change in the workplace is a problematic issue and that many workplaces seem to change little at all. My research questions were therefore concerned with the issue of boundary crossing as facilitating leadership learning and what happens within an organization as individuals continually develop their learning about leading and leadership. The research questions were:

- How do organizational boundaries impact on learning for new and established leaders?
- What range of ideas do school leaders draw upon when constructing understandings about leadership?
- What restrictions, limitations and opportunities are there in the way that leadership learning takes place within the school as a workplace?
- How does learning for leadership take place through discussion in the workplace?

## **1.1 Learning *for* the workplace**

Workplace learning theorists have engaged in a number of debates about the nature of learning: whether learning is intentional or unintentional, formal or informal, whether workplace knowledge is tacit or explicit. The general picture is complex, with little consensus and overlapping ideas. Colley et al. (2002) suggest that formal / informal distinctions are unhelpful as elements of both forms of learning are evident in all settings. Participatory metaphors of learning have been used to resolve the issues of intentional/incidental and planned and unplanned learning as each mode is seen as contributing to workplace activity (Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2004; Wenger 1998), and Harris (2006) suggests that theories of workplace learning need greater

clarity in the way that the relationship between knowledge and learning is conceptualized. These ongoing debates have tended to polarize ideas about learning as '*acquisition*' or '*participation*', famously captured by Sfard (1998) and seem to have moved a long way from her suggestion that *both* metaphors are needed to discuss learning. Taking a socially constructivist view of knowledge, as do Evans et al. (2006), raises the profile of the context, the person and the actions within a setting. The issue of learning *for* the workplace gives leverage to the multiple layers of purpose involved in workplace learning; the needs of employers, the needs of employees and the issue of transferability across contexts and roles. What remains problematic is the relationship between workplace learning, theories of knowledge and the associated possibilities for transfer of knowledge between people and settings. I return to these issues later in the introduction.

Schools are organizations in the public sector, and as an employer there are both local organizational and national interests in the learning that takes place for workers. Learning to lead in schools has been a major concern for successive UK governments as part of the drive to raise standards in education and to engineer a 'step change' in the nature of school leadership. From the creation of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in 2000 to the PCW report in 2007 there has been a relentless focus on school leaders as agents of change who will raise educational standards for children and implement the government '*remodelling the workforce*' agenda. The locus of change has moved on from individual school headship to system change, an emphasis on learning to lead for a new type of schooling (federated schools, extended schools, collaborative management teams), but the focus on leadership remains core to the NCSL task (PWC Report 2007). This task relates to learning for the national workforce but takes place at the local level.



Government interest in workplace learning for educational leaders is also related to succession planning, the need to increase capacity to fill anticipated vacancies, although the extent of these vacancies has been challenged (MacBeath 2006). It is argued that improving leadership at all levels creates a deeper pool of potential leaders for the future in terms of both the number and quality of leadership candidates. The drive to improve the pace and quality of leadership learning is intended to overcome these two problems and learning *in* and *through* the workplace is perceived as the most effective way of achieving this.

Individuals learn for work in a variety of ways and their motivations are complex. In schools learning to lead is part of an established career progression pattern, from teacher to headteacher, and NCSL programmes offer a variety of planned progression routes towards this goal. However, teachers learning to lead in the workplace are not only exposed to government programmes for leadership, they also encounter a range of alternative ideas through the people that they meet and their experiences both within and outside the workplace. Teachers may also be motivated towards leadership by a personal philosophy of 'making a difference', a commitment to social justice, rather than a career agenda. Learners, therefore, are exposed to a range of ideas about the future development of schools and school leadership in England, and learning for work encompasses both learning for the immediate environment and the development of views about education more generally. Individual learning may be both intentional and reflective of more general experiences.

The workplace is an organization which operates at the meso level, between the macro level of national interests and the micro level of individual motivations, and it is here that Wenger (1998) suggests that researchers can usefully investigate the relationship between these three levels. Learning for the school as a workplace

throws up immediate goals and challenges for individuals in addition to the longer term aims of individual career development or the quality and capacity building concerns of national government. Each school is judged as a stand alone organization in the context of a competitive environment measured by performance through published results and Ofsted reports. It is at this organizational level that the negotiation between individual, national and local demands for learning takes place.

What is left unstated here is the nature of the knowledge that individuals should, or can, learn that contributes to workplace goals. Questions about 'how' and 'what' leaders learn are important because it is assumed that the learning done by educational leaders impacts positively on their school as an organization and the learners within it – both children and adults. Research into school leaders' learning starts from the premise that this will inform practice, ultimately to help children learn more effectively. However, there are some assumptions here that are not always examined. There are questions about the 'purpose' of education (for the learners whether they are 'pupils' or staff, for the school, for the national educational system), and how, as Glatter puts it, '*educational aims and purposes connect with leadership and organization*' (2006:78). Glatter (ibid) and Avis (2006) both suggest that there are dangers for educational research in focussing on 'practices' that can lead to an individualistic and technical rationalist approach which addresses a narrow range of central government concerns. Whilst an investigation of the 'purpose' of education was outside the remit for this research project the research does try to broaden out from issues of succession planning and the completion of NCSL programmes for school leaders and look at the experience of learning to lead from the point of view of the participants.

The difficulties and complexities of defining the two key terms in this study are already apparent. *Learning* and *leadership* are both terms which have been

extensively researched and defined in numerous ways. Taking a socio-cultural approach to learning in the workplace resolves many, but not all, problems with the variety of terms. In this study, because the adults were experienced learners themselves and engaged in dealing with 'learning', I expected them to be aware of some of these debates about leadership and learning. However terms such as learning at work, learning from experience and learning 'on the job' are understood in multiple and subtly different ways by both researchers and the participants of research investigations (Colley et al. 2002; Harris 2006; Pegg 2007). As Boud and Solomon (2003) point out, raising the topic of learning in itself can facilitate reflection and learning through the research process. The researcher needs to step carefully when 'naming' something as learning when trying to understand learning from the participant's perspective.

## **1.2 Learning and leadership *in* the workplace**

Discussing workplace learning implies a theory of knowledge, but it is not always clear how theories of knowledge and theories of learning are connected and sometimes theories of knowledge are not explicitly discussed (Harris 2006). If learning is 'situated' and achieved through participation in both formal and informal engagements how does this relate to knowledge? There are differences here in the way that knowledge is sometimes treated as a resource – already known to some and needing to be transferred to others (expert – novice), and where knowledge is viewed as newly created in the relationships between people and their world. Of course, this is an academic distinction and these are not mutually exclusive possibilities, both are necessary and may occur at the same time in practice. There are also distinctions between academic and 'working' knowledge that have been categorized in various ways (Horizontal and Vertical knowledge, Bernstein 1999; propositional and process knowledge, Eraut 1994; Modes 1 and 2 knowledge, Gibbons et al. 1994, Nowotny et al. 2001). The problem with such categorizations is

that there is an implicit value and social power connected with one sort of knowledge rather than another, for example the higher status that has been historically given to academic, vertical or expert knowledge. The recent emphasis on horizontal notions of *learning* have tended to emphasize associated ideas about horizontal, process and context related knowledge, yet it is still unclear what the relationship between ideas about knowledge and learning practices might be. I return to this difficult issue again in chapters two, four and eight, but at this point in my introduction I move on to discuss my initial understanding of the key terms for this study, learning and leadership.

There are dangers in proposing an early definition for terms which, I suggest, are socially constructed and pliable abstractions. I want to avoid reifying the terms, and these initial comments are the starting point for the more detailed discussion which develops through the thesis. I begin by suggesting that we think about the way that we learn as a uniquely human feature embedded via the medium that we use for learning, ourselves, our language and our behaviour. Learning is in the eye of the beholder, a personal judgement made about an activity, sometimes after the fact, and evident in the end point of the activity, the achievement of understanding. I disagree with the school of thought that suggests that learning is only evident in changed behaviour, some understandings enhance thought but behaviour may remain the same. When we look for *evidence* of learning we often return to the idea of knowledge as a resource, something that has been 'obtained' by the learner, whereas evidence of knowledge may only emerge as the context changes for an individual or over the long term. Examining learning as 'practice' does offer possibilities for evidencing learning and knowledge and learning *through* practice may be important to developing understanding, but I suggest that learning and knowledge creation move *beyond* practice as it is possible to anticipate and imagine alternative futures.

Taking this broad approach to learning it is useful to consider Wenger's outline of a social perspective on learning (1998:226 -228). Learning is integral to human nature; imagination is central to the ability to learn and learning generates new understandings (Wenger uses the term 'meanings') for us as individuals which contribute to our understanding of ourselves and the social world. I consider learning to be both situated and socially constructed and what is 'named' as learning changes over time and place. Because we are participants in multiple social situations and develop our own learning throughout life there is a tension between the 'social' and the 'individual' here. Knowledge is not only social it is also individual and individuals have different knowledge(s) developed over and throughout their lives (Eraut 2004). From this starting point I develop the idea of learning as situated throughout the thesis and suggest how we might be more specific when using this concept to discuss organizational learning.

Whilst learning is possible for people throughout their lives, the recognition by others of an individual as an organizational leader is a far more selective event. Leadership, specifically the idea of the headteacher as leader, is a particular position in society achieved by relatively few. Leadership here is entangled with ideas about role, status, power and authority which seem to have changed little over time. The stereotypical image of the headteacher as school leader is remarkably enduring. Growing up we draw on our own experiences of what it is to relate to a headteacher/leader, through our own schooling and possibly later through the media, the schooling of our children or our work. The role of the headteacher has long been associated both with leadership as an idea and the school as an institution situated within a certain type of building. Leadership, and specifically educational leadership, is therefore a property of society through these shared experiences and everyone is entitled to comment on what it is to be a headteacher – good or bad. The role and authority of the headteacher are commonly associated

with Weberian formulations of power as top-down and hierarchical, captured by Harris's allusion to the '*power of one*' mentioned earlier. Here power is also associated with process knowledge (Eraut 1994) which includes acquired information about how to run a school, perceptions of the expert knowledge of the headteacher and the headteacher's knowledge of *all* the activities within the school, related to teaching, policy and organizational issues.

Policy drivers for change in school leadership and schools as institutions are increasing, but the value attributed to that change is contested. Some writers suggest that there has already been considerable change whilst others suggest that change has not gone far enough. Munby (2007) suggests that the extent to which there have been changes in the way that educational leadership is practiced in primary schools is open to question and that the individualistic role of the headteacher remains a key feature of English schools. The PWC Report supports this view,

*'Some of the barriers to distributing leadership that we identified included the persistence of the traditional 'hero-head' perception amongst heads themselves and their staff, coupled with parental and community expectations of an ever-present, ever-available head. In addition, there are a number of legislative, accountability and resource-related barriers that prevent heads distributing leadership further.'* (PWC 2007:ix).

Moving beyond this common sense response to 'headteacher as leader' by virtue of role and historical associations, one strand of educational research has identified leadership as an organizational quality (Ogawa and Bossert 1995). As a quality, leadership can emerge anywhere through an organization and is *'embedded not in particular roles but in the relationships that exist among the incumbents of roles'*. Leadership is a relational quality as *'The medium of leadership is, however, not individual action but social interaction.'* (ibid:235/238).

From this perspective leadership as an activity is always constructed and emerges from the relationships within the organization. At any time different people can be leaders or followers, or one person may change role from follower to leader in different situations. Knowledge is less closely tied to role and authority and has a more fluid relationship with power within the organization. These initial comments about leadership leave many issues for later exploration, but taking this relational perspective brings together the way that leadership is enacted through both the authority drawn from the organizational role (in particular that of the headteacher), and the power dynamics inherent in personal interactions in a particular setting at a particular time.

Thinking about learning *in* the school as a workplace brings together, in close juxtaposition, knowledge about learning and leadership, knowledge for leadership and the idea that even though ideas about leadership are socially constructed there are enduring concepts such as that of the individual headteacher that seem remarkably resistant to change. This complexity led me to wonder about the nature of constructed understandings of leadership at the local level of the school. How do individual ideas and wider discourses of change come together within workplaces as individuals develop their own understandings about leadership? The way that individuals negotiate and make sense of these differing discourses has implications for the way that they are ultimately able to develop their own ideas about educational leadership.

Developing this socially constructed perspective required me to articulate my own understanding about the relationship between the individual and the social. Many social theorists have been concerned with this problem but I found that a Bakhtinian perspective, which encompasses individual uniqueness and acknowledges that social structures are inherently complex and contradictory, offered a way to begin to think about these complex issues. Taking a Bakhtinian approach allowed me to

include the elements of historicity (discussed above) alongside the continual tensions and contradictions that characterise the interaction between the individual and the social, and to address the way in which contradictory discourses are interpreted and acted upon by individuals. Whilst this perspective suggests that there *are* structures for social life, these are not fixed, they are continually evolving and are interpreted and reinterpreted by individuals through talk and action.

‘Discourse’ is itself a word which is used to refer to different arenas: the discourse in social interaction between people, the study of discourses as sense making and the discourses of culture and wider social relations (Wetherell 2001). Bakhtin has been read in translation, and as Holquist points out in his glossary for ‘*The dialogic imagination*’ the Russian *slovo* (word) can refer to both discourse at the level of society with broad divisions within it and to refer to the specific ways in which speech is used between people (Holquist 1981:427). My interest in Bakhtin’s work developed from the way that he begins to develop a specific link between the broader discourses of society and discourses between individuals at the level of the word, however, for the purposes of discussion there needs to be some distinction in the way that we refer to these different levels of discourse. The situation is complicated because different writers in the fields of discourse analysis and literary studies have dealt with this in different ways, even when drawing on Bakhtin’s work themselves. For example Markova et al. equate discourse types with genres as different kinds of ‘*communicative activity*’ (2007:72) and Swales (2004) locates genres within discourse communities as a complex network of spoken and written resources.

To clarify my own terminology I will be using the term ‘discourse’ to refer to the general, the broad traditions of language through which knowledge and meaning is organized across ‘*societies, cultures and epochs*’ (Maybin 2001:12). In the context



of this thesis the broad discourse is one of educational leadership. Within this there are what Bakhtin refers to as social languages, '*the language of the lawyer, the doctor, the businessmen, the politician, the public education teachers and so forth*' (1981:289), perhaps close to what Swales refers to as a discourse community and within the thesis I shall refer to this secondary level of discourse as that of a social language (eg. of politicians, of teachers, of headteachers). At the level of social interaction between individuals I use the terms dialogue and genre. Dialogue refers to interactions between people, the immediate spoken or written communicative exchange and because, as I discuss later, all language is experienced through genres the way that I am using that term is also important. Genre is used in the Bakhtinian sense of genres being both spoken and written, but I am also attending to Miller's (1984, 1994) notion of genre as social action, the idea that genres can be understood not only as ways of categorizing language but that '*genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community*' (Miller 1994:67). This brings together both dialogue and non-discursive actions as components of genres and establishes genres as containing a '*pragmatic dimension*' that allows agency in the way that '*people in spatio-temporal communities do their work and carry out their purposes*' (Miller 1994:75). In the next section I explain how taking a Bakhtinian perspective clarified my interpretive position and allowed me to develop an analytic framework. While section 1.3 is intended to introduce the reader to the philosophical approach of Bakhtin, a detailed explanation of the way in which I used Bakhtinian concepts follows in chapter two.

### 1.3 Taking a Bakhtinian<sup>1</sup> approach to research

Placed somewhere between post-modernism and the turn to language in the social sciences (Maybin 2001) Bakhtinian work does not sit easily within any one particular field. The diversity and contradictions within and between the works have led to accusations that educational researchers have 'picked and mixed' Bakhtin's ideas to suit their own ends, and in doing so have bowdlerised his key concepts (Matusov 2007). I aim to avoid that by clearly explaining how this approach informed my research methodology and became integrated with my ethnographic approach as a researcher. I demonstrate how these concepts were used in relation to the data from the ethnography in chapter 3.

In addition to Bakhtin's contribution to literary studies he wrote on general philosophical issues and specifically addressed the issue of the study of human sciences in '*Towards a Methodology for the Human Sciences*' (1986). After being taken up by the West the contribution of Bakhtin (and other members of the Bakhtinian circle) has been debated, but also built upon by others in the areas of literacy studies, discourse analysis and philosophy. In taking a Bakhtinian approach to research I not only draw upon the original works of Bakhtin but also the development of these ideas by other writers.

Bakhtin establishes a clear distinction between the study of the human sciences and that of the natural sciences. He asserts that limits of 'precision' in the natural sciences are the discovery of identity of the 'thing', for example: the structure of a cell, the pattern of DNA, the composition of the human genome. For the human sciences the study of the subject however, is different. The subject has a voice and therefore the '*cognition of it can only be dialogic, that is, in relation to the 'other'*'

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<sup>1</sup> The authorship of the Bakhtin and Voloshinov writings is established as separate (Morson and Emerson, 1990; Shotter and Billig, 1998), but there is agreement that the Bakhtin Circle was a forum for discussion and collaboration over a number of ideas. I am using the broad term Bakhtinian as I am drawing on a range of works, including other more recent writers in this tradition.

(1986:161 original emphasis). Bakhtin's dialogism is central to his understanding of the person in the world in terms of both ethical action and in dialogic language as the basis for social interaction and individual understanding. Evaluation, in the sense of making responsible personal judgements, is an inherent component of this dialogic cognition and of the ethical act. Key to this view of the human sciences is the uniqueness of each act and its unrepeatability, even though each act is answerable and connected to those of others.

Bender (1998) describes Bakhtin's view of acts '*as locations where specific individuals interact while not sharing definitions of the situation, or only partially sharing meaning*' and identifies this as a shift from the idea of participation in a shared community of meaning and as demonstrating '*an alternative understanding of social interaction.*' (1998:193). She goes on to identify Bakhtin's interactions as always taking place with a specific other in a specific context and at a particular time. This differs significantly from the idea that there are patterns of interactions emerging from the relation of the self to a 'generalized other' or community. The way that this social interaction takes place is located in a language which is dialogic and as a continual struggle for meaning in each unique context. Bakhtin calls this the '*eternal renewal of meanings in all new contexts*' (1986:169), what we now more usually call 'socially constructed' in the social sciences.

It would be wrong to conclude that for Bakhtin we are at the mercy of a cacophony of multiple discourses or experience a series of unrelated and individualistic acts. Bakhtin's philosophy retains a strong sense of the importance of historical influences and of the importance of the past, present and anticipated future context for each individual. Each individual's '*evaluative accent*'<sup>2</sup> in their use of words implies a struggle over meaning and judgements about the positive or negative implications of

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<sup>2</sup> Maybin 2001/2006 attributes this phrase to Voloshinov, Bakhtin uses the similar 'expressive aspect' and 'evaluative attitude' (1986:84). I use the term 'evaluative note', explained in chapter 2.

the words used and their references to other words and acts. These evaluations and judgements are made through and in relation to the language that we use and the way that language is connected to authority, power and control in any given society. Each act is 'unfinalized', that is, we continually negotiate our way through social interactions to develop our own perspective at any given moment, a continual process of '*becoming*'. To summarize, the key difference between a Bakhtinian approach and one that considers a multiplicity of discourses, such as the work of Foucault (1970), is that for Bakhtin each and every word is stratified and divided and riven with tensions. These tensions are not resolved until the point of utterance when the individual, in their dialogic relation with the world, places their own evaluative note within the utterance in terms of their individual understanding and individual context.

For Bakhtin, then, the social world is composed of the dialogic interactions between people in the everyday. To study the social world means to strive for '*understanding*', on a personal everyday level and as a researcher of the human sciences. This process of understanding relies on four elements that work together. Firstly, *perception* which Bakhtin illustrates with the physical - word, colour, spatial form. This is followed by *recognition*, is this 'familiar or unfamiliar', in other words have we already categorized it. Next we need to understand the *significance* of the act/word in the context that it is in and lastly achieve '*active dialogic understanding*', the judgement that we make about the act/word (1986:159). Bakhtin goes on to state that precision in the human sciences is

*'surmounting the otherness of the other without transforming him(sic) into purely one's own (any kind of substitution, modernization, nonrecognition of the other, and so forth).'*' (1986:169)

This demands creativity in developing our own understanding, and Bakhtin is clear that '*Understanding is impossible without evaluation*' (1986:142).

Taking a Bakhtinian approach to research means adopting an ontology that suggests that the social world can never be captured completely, but also one that requires the researcher to strive for an understanding of the way that the social world operates for both the participants and myself. I am in a dialogic relation with multiple others: the participants in my study, my network of research associates and the many authors and speakers whose writing I draw upon to develop my ideas. Through my dialogic self I also have the capacity for reflexivity through internal dialogue and Hermans, in developing the idea of the dialogic self, summarizes the researcher's position as

*'neither a neutral observer who documents the events in the subjects' lives in an 'objective' way, nor is her account purely subjective. Instead, the researcher's voice intermingles with other voices so that her subjectivity is retained within intersubjectivity and, by implication, knowledge is located between voices.'* (Hermans 1999:85).

This also demands creativity. The responsibility for voicing/representing that knowledge, though, is entirely mine, and it is here that I drew on Bakhtin's notion of the ethical act, which Bell and Gardiner summarise as *'a primordial concern for the other and an unequivocal recognition of difference'* (1998:5) rooted in everyday social life and dialogic encounters.

#### **1.4 Dialogic relations in the research project**

This thesis can be seen as the articulation of my own dialogic engagement with leadership and learning. This engagement takes place through the literature, texts, policies and pedagogies of learning (Bakhtin terms these formal expressions of language the secondary speech genres). It also takes place through the everyday dialogue that I have with, and observe between, the participants of the study (using both the secondary speech genres of the teaching profession and Bakhtin's primary speech genres of everyday life). Bakhtin is clear that analysis of *both* types of genre is required to understand the significance of each within the context of the

discussion – this research. There are twin contexts here, the workplace for those becoming school leaders and the context of the research for myself. Different engagements with the primary and secondary speech genres come into play for each context. This problem is identified in methodological discussions which point to the tensions between participants' and analysts' perspectives in understanding the world (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) and the positioning of the researcher within the research. These issues are discussed further in chapter 3, but, interacting in this small group, the researcher became part of the study by raising issues which may not otherwise have been the focus of attention for the participants. The achievement of dialogic understanding also demands an evaluative view of the way that learning to lead takes place and the commentary on this is put forward in the expectation of a response from the readers of the research, be they the participants of the study or educational researchers in future time.

The research act is also an ethical act, in the sense of a social interaction with others and in the way that voices are represented in the final work. The research was approved by the Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee of the Open University. I used the BERA (2004) guidelines for educational researchers and obtained individual permissions from all participants. Throughout the research I also followed Rogers (1992) approach in taking a position of '*unconditional positive regard*' to the responses that the interviewees made in relation to reflections on their own leadership. I did this because I believe that as participants and learners the people who had agreed to be interviewed placed themselves in a position of vulnerability in terms of their self-esteem. It was important to me that the research strove to only enhance their sense of self as leader, not to detract from this in any way. This was particularly important in the group discussion where the participants were raising issues of leadership with the headteacher that could be perceived as critical and have implications for workplace relations. My ethical responsibilities here were to manage this situation and to preserve the confidentiality of the individual

interviews. I did this by drawing on my experience as a group facilitator, but was clear that my role was to maintain the relationships of the group, even if this was at the expense of pursuing an aspect of discussion that might be pertinent to my own research.

The final ethical act is the presentation of the voices of others in the thesis, and the responsibility to represent the voices of the subjects of the research, the participants, other commentators and my own, as clearly as possible. In order to do this I have taken two approaches. The first is the use of extended quotations, extracts from school documents and extracts from my fieldnotes in the body of the text to preserve a sense of the dialogic relationships between myself and others during the research. The second is the attempt to keep the analysis at the level of the individual social actions in a given context, retaining a sense of location and history and at the same time giving a sense of the uncompleted and unfinished nature of the lives of the participants. This attempts to avoid 'freezing' the action at a particular point in time and aims to illustrate how an individual might develop their understanding in one particular setting. My suggestion is that this type of analysis could continue into the future in this and other settings. Whilst I am aware that this makes for rather uncomfortable reading – the topics shift and the interrelations between them are not always linear – I wanted to preserve the 'messiness' of everyday life in the account and to enable the reader to enter into a dialogic encounter with the different voices in the text.

## **1.5 An ethnographic approach to a single school study**

Ethnography as a research approach is closely allied to the Bakhtinian perspective that I outline above. Ethnography attends to the detail of social actions and can be combined with discourse analytic approaches as participants accounts can be read for both what they *'tell us about phenomena'* and analysed *'in terms of the perspectives they imply, the discursive strategies they employ, and even the*

*psychosocial dynamics they suggest.*' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). For ethnography the focus is on the detail of the social world, the particular, the processes of interactions. The position of the researcher as the key research 'instrument' and the concept of reflexivity are two core tenets of ethnographic research that fit with a Bakhtinian view of social research as a dialogic engagement with the social world. The ethnographer acknowledges that there are multiple perspectives possible, and that the emphasis of research is to develop an analytic understanding of these perspectives. Whilst there is a general agreement that observation and interaction form the core methods for ethnographic research the place of language in ethnography is rather more contentious.

Ethnographers have long considered the social characteristics of talk as important sources of evidence, and recognise that talk is used to accomplish social actions. More recently, the development of the field of discourse analysis has resulted in an increasing interest in formalising the combination of ethnographic and discourse analytic methods (cf. Linguistic Ethnography<sup>3</sup>). A close attention to language as a medium for professional learning seemed important to the study, but I did not want to lose sight of the other possibilities for learning (for example, through observation) or the material characteristics of the school that might impact on the study. Combining discourse analytic and ethnographic methods seemed possible, and taking a Bakhtinian approach to discourse analysis enabled me to draw on both the wider social discourses of policy and the local and immediate talk within the school.

As I have already suggested above, selecting the primary school workplace as a domain of learning did not mean that I could make assumptions about the way that learning about leadership might be restricted to within the workplace for individuals. Nor, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out, could I assume that the

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<sup>3</sup> The Journal of Sociolinguistics Special Issue (2007) 11, (5) draws together a collection of articles outlining and discussing the emergence of EL as a methodological field.



possibilities for learning to lead were consistent across the different contexts (places, times and relationships) within the school. It was these very differences that I was interested in exploring. Taking an ethnographic linguistic approach and studying one school in detail allowed me to focus on everyday processes taking place in the workplace, the way that the participants interacted with each other and myself and commented about these processes as more or less important for their own learning.

Selecting a single case had implications for the study: the advantages were the time available for involvement, from the start to the end of a school year; the detail gained from the different data collection methods, the following up of developing relationships and feedback discussions with the participants and reflective conversations at the end of the study. Stake (1998) suggests that this type of instrumental case study is useful to refine theory and to provide insight into an issue. The perceptions of those learning to lead a school are important for school leadership development policies and in terms of individual experiences of schools as learning environments. The limitations of single case studies are usually discussed in terms of the problems for generalization. Stake suggests that to try to do this is to misunderstand the value of the detailed investigation of a particular case, "*The purpose of a case study is not to represent the world, but to represent the case.*" (1998:104) and the contribution this can make towards public policy. Stake also suggests 'naturalistic generalization' and Bassey (1999) has suggested 'fuzzy generalizations' are possible in education where schools have similar characteristics. It is not the aim of this research to make specific generalizations, but I discuss a number of questions and implications that follow on from my findings in Chapter 8.

## 1.6 The presentation of the research

The thesis is presented in three distinct sections. In the first section I explain my conceptual framework and the methods used in the research; my position here is one of the researcher embedded in the world of research. This is followed by a shift in perspective to the school as the context for the second section. Here I explore the social languages of school leadership development and the associated genres of social action before presenting the ethnographic data, which integrates the participants' voices with my own as I discuss their experience of learning to lead in the workplace. In the third section of the thesis I summarise the research findings before stepping back from these individual voices, and the issues of Peony Hill school, to take an organizational perspective. I then move on to discuss the implications of the research for both school leadership and the study of workplace learning.

### Part 1 – the research approach

In Chapter two I explain how I developed my conceptual framework bringing together *boundaries*, *spaces* and *genres* as investigative tools for the research project. This chapter establishes that boundary crossing and dialogue act as key concepts underpinning theories of workplace learning and explains how Bakhtinian ideas are useful for understanding learning by professionals in the workplace. The chapter then goes on to explore the nature of boundaries more specifically and draws together boundaries, spaces and genres as concepts which work together to form my key interpretive framework for the study.

I then explain the ethnographic methods used in the school to explore learning and leading. In this third chapter I demonstrate how the methods that I used allowed me to explore ideas that were not always explicitly discussed within the workplace, and I explain how the conceptual tools that I described in chapter two were applied to develop an analysis of the data.

## **Part 2 – workplace learning at Peony Hill School**

In part 2 of the thesis the focus is on the school and how leaders learn in the workplace. In Chapter four I review the social languages of educational leadership through the secondary genres, '*all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary*' (Bakhtin 1986:62), the key government policies and research about leadership development in English schools. I then move on to explore the genres of social action, the pedagogies for workplace learning, that are assumed or implied as part of these strategies for the development of school leaders. The literature in chapter four is necessarily selective, but I have tried to focus on material that was mentioned by the participants in the study and that which related to the careers and working lives of school teachers and leaders more generally.

The work then shifts to the ethnographic case study where I illustrate the research through the integration of the voices of the participants in the study and my own voice as a participant in the setting. Peony Hill primary school has 350 pupils aged 8 to 11 and is in a semi-rural area. Of the 16 teaching staff the five formal leaders were the central participants in the study, and the themes and extracts illustrated here are drawn from my involvement with these leaders.

The research themes take a progressively more detailed approach to the way that boundaries, spaces and genres were important in relation to learning in the workplace. In chapter five I focus on the way that external and internal boundaries were significant for the participants of the study and impacted on their learning. I look at how this school created and maintained particular boundaries and how the career paths of the leaders wove across and through the boundaries of this and other schools.

In chapter six I explore how boundaries and spaces interacted to frame different performance spaces for leadership for the participants of the study. It became

apparent that their evaluation of these differential experiences was a significant factor in the way that they began to view the leadership that they were exposed to and their own potential for leadership development.

In chapter seven I explore the way that boundary making and genres were consequential for the way that those learning to lead were able to begin to express and test out their own ideas. I illustrate two particular genres from the repertoire of genres available to the learners, and comment on how these genres moved across and through the school with different implications for the way in which learning took place.

### **Part 3 – Synthesis and discussion**

Chapter eight brings the three core elements of my research together and discusses the impact of boundaries, spaces and genres for workplace learning in this school. I explore how the participants began to develop their own evaluation of the leadership that they experienced and began to express their own 'evaluative note', to position themselves as leaders within this primary school and beyond. I continue with a more wide ranging discussion that explores the association of boundary crossing with learning and the importance of boundaries and genres as constitutive of learning environments. I discuss how my framework relates to, and I suggest builds on, the 'expansive-restrictive' continuum and ideas about expansive learning environments discussed by Fuller and Unwin (2004) and Evans et al. (2006). I conclude with my reflections about the study and suggestions for further research.

## Part One

## Chapter 2

### Boundaries and dialogue - the implications for learning

This chapter discusses the way in which I understand learning for individuals as situated and as the ongoing process of the development of an '*evaluative note*'. My work emerges from a socio-cultural approach to learning which takes the individual-in-social-action as the unit of analysis (Cobb 1999), but acknowledges that individuals are positioned differently in relation to the social. The socio-cultural approach develops the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) in drawing together the relationship between the social world and the individual psychological world, with a particular emphasis on how we learn through interaction. I draw principally on the strand of socio-cultural work that takes a linguistic approach when considering learning through working together. This approach therefore draws on nuanced ideas of the fit between an organization and an individual (Billett, 2004a, 2004b), the way that organizational boundaries are constructed rather than static (Hernes 2003, 2004) and the importance of language as constitutive of social action (Bakhtin 1981, 1986; Mercer, 2000, 2004). Bakhtin's ideas are particularly important as an individual's '*expressive aspect*' links the inner dialogue of the person with the local social situation and this is evident in the words that they use, making the link between the psychological and the social available to the researcher. I suggest that the ongoing understanding and position of an individual is evident in their developing evaluative note, heard through the expressive aspects of the words used.

In brief, I argue that by examining the various boundaries and speech genres in play within the workplace we can begin to indicate the way that access to the heteroglossic world of ideas and knowledge about leadership is facilitated or

restricted. The range of speech genres available within and outside the workplace offer differential possibilities for individuals to express their evaluative note and a variety of spaces to perform leadership. The relationship between institutional boundaries and genre boundaries is important as the way that boundaries between genres are maintained by the institution has an impact on the way that learning at work takes place.

In the following sections I will be explaining these Bakhtinian terms, and the way in which I am using them alongside a detailed consideration of boundaries, spaces and genres. After a brief review of the term situated learning I go on to explain the Bakhtinian terms, dialogism, heteroglossia, genres, utterance and how these, taken together, enable individuals to develop an evaluative note. I then review two key theoretical areas in the field of workplace learning and explain how the concept of boundary underscores the idea of 'expansive' workplace learning. I suggest that the concept of 'boundary' needs greater attention in order to fully develop an understanding of the way that people learn from their experience in the workplace. I then go on to discuss the key elements of my conceptual framework, boundaries, spaces and genres. I explain that, as boundary crossing and dialogue are both necessary elements for learning, analytic purchase can be gained through using the Bakhtinian ideas of heteroglossia and speech genres to combine elements of boundary, discourse and time-space relations when investigating learning to lead in the workplace.

### **2.0.1 What do we mean by 'situated learning'?**

Situated learning became widely used as a term following Lave and Wenger's influential work '*Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*' (1991) and has been taken up by many other socio-cultural writers. It is closely bordered by work that is identified as constructivist dealing with individual 'situated cognition'

(sometimes 'distributed cognition') and, moving further away from the individual, work such as Actor Network Theories (ANT) that consider social action to be the consequence of a network of relationships between 'actants' which can be human or inanimate (Anderson et al. 2000; Anderson et al. 2003; Cobb 1999; Greeno et al. 1999; Hutchins and Klausen 2002; McGregor 2004; Wenger 1998). Within these fields writers have different epistemological and ontological positions, use a range of units for analysis and have different research concerns. One ongoing debate between situated learning theorists focuses around the issue of the relationship between the individual (mind/biography) and the social context described variously as the domain of learning, the environment and as socially shared knowledge or participative practices. Edwards (2006) suggests that shifting the analytic perspective from one that defines context as a place within which an individual sits to one where activity or practice contextualizes the situation is one way of overcoming this individual/context duality. Work by Gheradi (2006) who focuses on practices in the workplace can be seen in this light. Edwards goes on to suggest an alternative to this move, that we change our understanding of context from that of a container of individual learning and practice to one of relationships between '*people, objects and mediating tools*'. Here *learning is 'limited by the inter-related discourses'* (Edwards 2006) and local practices at a particular site of learning, but, importantly, this also retains the importance of the relationship between the social and physical worlds.

In exploring the meaning of context for situated learning Edwards is reflecting on the difficulty of managing the duality of individual/social in situated learning and the importance of moving away from the idea that learning is restricted to the cognitive or understood through acquisition metaphors (Sfard 1998) that veer towards the individualistic. Even so, the issue of transfer of learning by individuals across settings and/or domains and the issue of innovation and transfer of working knowledge remains problematic. Exploring how relationships within a setting both



make wider connections and are bounded remains crucial in considering learning as situated. To consider the *limits* of learning, conceptualized as located in discourses, practices and relationships in a particular situation, it is helpful to examine where and what the boundaries are for the discourses, practices and relationships in that situation. This conception of situated learning tends to take the social as the priority for analysis, individual learning only becoming relevant in demonstrable action.

Situated learning, then, is a term that seeks to establish a general principle that can explain the local and particular action, the relationship between the mind and the social for individuals in a particular place and at a particular time. To add detail to this rather general concept I use a dialogic approach to balance the issue of individual mind and social situation. Bakhtin's dialogism is useful as the person not only has a dialogic relationship with the external world (physical and social aspects) but also an inner dialogue of the self that connects the external to the internal worlds of the person (Hermans and Dimaggio 2007). I add to this dialogic approach by strengthening and adding detail to the concept of boundaries as an interrelated factor which shapes the situated nature of the learning. Learning is understood from my Bakhtinian perspective as the ongoing development of an individual's 'evaluative note', the resolution of external and internal dialogues at a particular point, in a continual process of 'becoming'. The evaluative note is evident through the developing consistency of the expressive accent of the words used to generate a personal position, in this case in relation to leadership. For my study I contend that leaning is evident through the voicing of an individual's evaluative note and situated in the individuals dialogic relations with the heteroglossic world, shaped by their interactions with the boundaries of their situation at a particular time/place and through an internally persuasive dialogue of the self.

## 2.0.2 Dialogism explained

Bakhtin sees the dialogic relation as the basis of all meaning, and all meaning is therefore relative and only exists in the relation between bodies. Holquist explains this as the

*'bodies occupying simultaneous but different space, where bodies may be thought of as ranging from the immediacy of our physical bodies, to political bodies and to bodies of ideas in general (ideologies)' (2002:21 his emphasis)*

However, dialogism contains a third element, the fact that each event is simultaneously perceived and experienced by individuals from a particular position at a particular time. Dialogism is not a bipartite relation but a tripartite idea, where *'meaning of whatever is observed is shaped by the place from which it is perceived'* (1990:21 *ibid*). Language is the medium that constitutes the way in which we are able to think about both relations between 'bodies' and simultaneously, this in relation to our own experience. Hermans and Dimaggio (2007) explain that this 'I' – 'other' relation has a *'dynamic multiplicity of 'I' positions or voices'* and that we are able to have an internal dialogue with the self through this variety of possible positions (2007:340)

The dialogical nature of language offers the capacity to perceive differences, contrasts and oppositions both between people and in the different approaches that people may take at any time. The dialogical self (Hermans 1999) is also a shifting and inconsistent self, but with the capacity to relate to both the immediate context and to the historic and multiple possible other contexts of the present and the future by drawing down the heteroglossia, the many and complex languages that exist in the world. The heteroglossia of language extends across the social world and is no less available to the participants of my research than it is to me, yet we always have different positions in relation to the heteroglossia. For each individual it is in this interrelationship between dialogic thought and the heteroglossic world that the possibility for the creation of new understandings exists.

These key ideas are not only the expression of a philosophical position but linked to individual action through the way that Bakhtin developed his ideas about language. Wegerif (2007) makes a timely reminder about the importance of Bakhtin's ontological position; that the world is made up of different perspectives, and learning emerges from the dialogic tensions rather than the resolution of ideas through consensual voices and rational discussion (Gardiner 2004; Wegerif 2007). Bakhtin's position can be placed within the broad notion of knowledge and learning as socially constructed, but in a very specific way as this dialogic approach eschews consensual social knowledge or a deterministic discourse and situates knowledge as *in tension* within individuals in the light of their current and past experiences and also between individuals and the world in their local context. This connection between the local and the social is made through language, and I outline Bakhtin's key ideas about language in the next sections to illustrate the way that these connections are made and result in individual learning.

### **2.0.3 Heteroglossia – languages in the world**

The heteroglossia of language is the way that the social world is shaped at any time, but rather than offering a structuring set of discourses it is through an individual's dialogic relation with the inherent tensions and contradictions within the heteroglossia that individuals create their own meanings. Bakhtin defines heteroglossia as

*'The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases) – this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre.'* (1981:263)

But he goes on to say that these languages are distributed and ordered in terms of the '*ideological voices of an era*' (1981:417) locating the shape of the heteroglossia of languages in their specific historic time. Hermans and Dimaggio (2007) extend this idea and discuss the globalized heteroglossia of the modern world as evident in the local context, identities and individual psychology in the dialogic relations of the C21<sup>st</sup> century.

For the individual this heteroglossia is crucial, Holquist explains

*'Heteroglossia is a situation, the situation of a subject surrounded by the myriad responses he or she might make at any particular point, but any one of which must be framed in a specific discourse selected from the teeming thousands available.'* (2002:69)

But it is apparent that the heteroglossic discourses are not all equally strong, and that the nature of the heteroglossia is inherently unstable as the different forces represented struggle for dominance. Nor do I consider the individual an uninformed free agent with boundless choices. The responses that are made are informed by past experiences and an individual evaluative stance that develops throughout life in relation to this heteroglossia of discourses. This leads to a very different and specific understanding about 'situated learning', moving away from one of situation as *school* or teaching *practice* to one which focuses attention on the *individual* at a particular moment in a particular place and their ongoing dialogic relationship with the heteroglossia available to them. This is closer to Edward's idea about relationships and discourses, but I add the notion of boundaries to this framework (discussed later in this chapter) as important shapers of these discourses and the way in which individuals can engage in this dialogic relationship.

This stratified and tensioned nature of the heteroglossia is important because the ordering and distribution of social languages and genres allows a consideration of

the notion of the differential power in play. It is here that the contrasts, inconsistencies and disagreements are heard through the polyphony of different voices. Power is expressed through the authoritative and monologic voice of centripetal forces (the tendency to centralization). For Bakhtin, this authority of the centre is achieved through domination and the silencing of alternative voices, but this position can never be fully maintained. The inherent tensions and contradictions within the heteroglossia and the dialogic relation of individual thought with the multiple strata of the heteroglossia of language enables an individual to develop their own internally persuasive dialogue. This is centrifugal, multivoiced and has the capacity to challenge and evaluate the authority of the powerful and dominant voices within the heteroglossia, and even the capacity to go on to develop new forms of language. This, as Evans (2001) points out, '*entails that voices are never really finalized, that they are always open to revision and displacement by other voices in the struggle for greater audibility.*' (2001:57) Meaning and power are continually negotiated.

#### **2.0.4 Everyday language and professional talk**

The '*professional language*' of teachers can be conceptualized as a particular stratum within the heteroglossia closely associated with the institution of schooling. Professional languages, texts and the official languages of policy, spoken or written, are for Bakhtin secondary genres. However, these genres can only emerge through and from the language of everyday life, the primary speech genres, with their complex, fluid and yet normalizing characteristics which enable them to be shared across the broad language community. Secondary genres, such as a professional language, are influenced by the history of social groups that have a tendency to formalize, control and regulate discourse. The primary genres of everyday life are unregulated and, whilst tradition is important, are not managed by social groups and have no 'plan' for development or unity. These genres develop with variety and in a

haphazard way. Because the secondary genres are always spoken in an everyday situation they are experienced through the primary genres and the tensions between the centripetal tendencies of the secondary genres and the centrifugal forces of everyday language become enacted at the point of utterance. This offers the possibility for change in professional languages at the point of use and expression of the individuals own evaluative position. There is therefore an intricate relationship between the primary and secondary genres. The boundaries between them can be fluid, but different flows between them exist for different genres and at different times and places. The degree of fluidity is a product of the tensions between the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the heteroglossia.

The nature of an individual genre is defined by Bakhtin as composed of three elements, '*relatively stable thematic, compositional and stylistic types of utterances*' (1986:64) and more recent genre theory has built on this. The nature of a genre is explained further in section 2.24 and chapter 3. My point here is that for Bakhtin there is an intimate and inseparable relationship between the genre and the utterance. For Bakhtin, the utterance is the basic and irreducible unit of communication in all its forms, textual or verbal. It does not correspond to grammatical conventions of sentences or paragraphs. The utterance is always cast in a particular genre:

*'we guess its genre from the very first words; we predict a certain length (that is, the approximate length of the speech whole) and a certain compositional structure; we foresee the end; that is, from the very beginning we have a sense of the speech whole, which is only later differentiated during the speech process.'* (1986:79)

It is here at the point of utterance that a definite position is taken in the '*sphere of communication*' (ibid:91) as the utterance responds to previous utterances, addresses the topic of the utterance and the audience of the utterance – the other. This backward and forward consideration of the utterance is referred to as

‘addressivity’ (Bakhtin 1986:95; Holquist 2002; Maybin 2006). The utterance becomes part of the chain of communication. Each utterance has clear and distinct boundaries, defined as a change in speaking subject, even though it is in response to, and addressed to another. *‘Any utterance – from a short (single –word) rejoinder in everyday dialogue to the large novel or scientific treatise – has, so to speak, an absolute beginning and an absolute end;’* (1986:71). This is the point at which the individual speaker adds their own evaluative tone and can ‘re-accentuate’ the voices of others. For Bakhtin, this evaluation is a *‘necessary aspect of dialogic cognition.’* (1986:161)

### **2.0.5 Developing an evaluative note as learning**

Thinking of the world and the chain of individual utterances as ‘unfinalized’ generates a perspective about learning that eschews learning as ‘acquisition’ (Sfard 1998) and of knowledge as an object. Learning as ‘participation’ (Sfard 1998) or as ‘construction/re-construction’ (Hager 2004) become the metaphors for learning and knowledge becomes conceptualized as socially constructed. For Bakhtin learning is a process of ideological becoming, the unfinished working out of an individual’s evaluative note in relation to their position within the heteroglossia at any one time. Maybin (2005;2006) explores this concept and has studied how children develop their individual position in the world through the expression of their evaluative stances. She describes the development of an individual’s evaluative capacity as a *‘central double-edged driving force’* (2005) that simultaneously engages both the development of the individual and their socialization into their cultural world. Approaching learning from a socially constructed perspective suggests that this process is ongoing and that as adults continually create their social world they simultaneously develop this evaluative note. As part of this ongoing *‘becoming’* an individual’s position is not necessarily consistent, it is subject to contradictions and change. The expressive accent at each point may change tone, but I suggest that in

developing as a leader each person begins to adopt a characteristic evaluative note heard through a particular range of evaluative accents in the words.

In terms of professional development, in this case teachers becoming educational leaders, Mahendran (2003) suggests that dialogic relations can be conceptualized as operating in four specific ways to form an evaluative note:

- As talk between people: the active turn taking and anticipation of other people's responses to speech and action.
- As a dialogue of the self; the way we think in language and can engage in imaginary dialogue from a variety of positions.
- Dialogue with the public sphere – encounters with the multiple social discourses that exist, the heteroglossia of debate, politics, policy and social ideas that exist about any given topic.
- Dialogue through the use of the multiplicity of meanings possible within an individual word.

(adapted from Mahendran 2003)

From a Bakhtinian perspective all of these elements occur simultaneously in the active engagement between people and in their developing understanding of the world around them.

## **2.1 Boundary crossing - expansive development of the evaluative note**

Individual learning is therefore situated in a dialogic relationship with the social world and this returns us to the question of the way in which that world is bounded for individuals. These boundaries shape an individual's access to the heteroglossia of ideas, not only those of the public sphere but also the people that they are in contact with, their past and current relationships that shape interactions and their relationship with the physical world around them. Adding to these experiences is seen as key to expanding learning for individuals, increasing the variety of conceptual, discursive and physical resources available to them. One of the



difficulties with situated learning has been its association with place and concerns about the limits of the resources available. The transfer of knowledge between situations and from other places and discourses is seen as problematic for people and organizations. The resultant focus on boundaries has become particularly important in the way that learning is conceptualized as an expansive activity, and it is here that notion of boundary crossing as a learning activity and device in itself has taken a firm hold (for example: Learning Networks, Communities of Practice, Best Practice Groups).

Educational research about action at the boundary has been concerned with this key issue of transfer, usually that of knowledge and information, and there has been some concern that socially situated views of learning are so embedded in each particular social setting that transfer is unattainable and that an emphasis on 'practices' as learning acts to confine workers to one particular setting (Edwards 2005; Evans et al. 2006). Tuomi-Grohn and Engestrom (2003) focus on boundary crossing and knowledge transfer in their edited work, *'Between School and Work. New Perspectives on Transfer and Boundary-crossing'* and in this volume Beach (2003) identifies boundary crossing as *'propagating knowledge'* – the boundary becomes a field rather than a fence. Beach looks at transitions in depth and identifies four main types of conceptual knowledge transfer – learning for one or both partners in an activity. These are described as lateral transition (one way), collateral transitions (two way), encompassing transitions and mediational transitions. Beach calls this *'consequential transition'* implying that some transitions do not consequentially impact on knowledge. Consequential transitions are *'consciously reflected on, struggled with, and shifts the individual sense of self or social position. Thus, consequential transitions link identity with knowledge propagation'* (2003:42). He goes on to say that *'not all changes in knowledge have direct and apparent consequences for ones sense of self and social position'* (2003:56) but only alludes as to why this should be. One possibility, as I suggest

later, is the significance of centripetal and monologic speech genres in relation to individual transitions across boundaries.

In the psychological literature transfer across boundaries is concerned with the slightly different issue of transfer between roles, the issue of conceptual and social distinctions. Roles are the '*building block of social systems*' (Ashforth et al. 2000:473) and an important concept in organizational, psychological and cultural theorizing. Work on identity has developed the view that roles are continually negotiated and constructed by individuals through their everyday lives. Transition between roles is seen as a requirement of daily life, and Ashforth et al.(2000) examine micro-transitions occurring on an everyday basis between work and other social domains (home, social, education). The key ideas here are flexibility and permeability in role boundaries in relation to roles that run along a continuum from highly segmented to integrated. For example, '*a transition between highly segmented roles entails multiple boundary crossings, including temporal, physical, and/or social boundaries*' (2000:477) whereas integrated roles may require '*buffering*' work at the boundaries to prevent '*blurring*' between roles, reducing anxiety and increasing the ability to focus on the demands of a particular role. 'Boundary 'work' in the psychological sense, is important as it '*creates more or less distinct 'territories of the self*' (Nippert-Eng in Ashforth 2000: 482) and it takes place in a variety of ways, many of which are spatial and temporal. Ashforth et al. suggest that boundary work and transition work are '*a function of where, on the segmentation-integration continuum, a particular set of roles lies.*' (2000:482) and the factors influencing this are role identification, situational strength and culture.

The significance of boundary crossing and roles becomes salient when considering the way that leadership learning is seen as facilitated by taking on additional responsibilities (or roles) within an organization and in the new role taken up by the learner when work shadowing or experiencing a placement in a different setting. The

way that learners incorporate their working and learning roles is important here as the extent to which learners are required to buffer between roles or blur role boundaries may be consequential for the learning taking place. This relates to work on leaders' and learners' identities and some theorists who argue that leaders cannot allow themselves to be seen as learners as this is a weak identity position (Argyris 1991).

### **2.1.1 Boundary crossing as a key theme in workplace learning**

This type of learning opportunity (workshadowing, placements or taking on a new role) is an example of the way that expanding beyond local boundaries is associated with innovation, skill development and organizational learning. The idea that workplace learning is 'situated learning' in terms of place, skills, knowledge and social relationships is widely accepted and boundary crossing acts as both a theoretical device to explain new learning and as a recommended activity for individuals and organizations interested in developing their learning. However, as I pointed out earlier, the way that theorists conceptualise situated learning and boundary crossing as an expansive mechanism is often implicit. Two particular research schools that have explicitly focussed on these areas in the field of workplace learning are Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and work that can be broadly encompassed as taking up the ideas of Communities of Practice (CoP). Rather than a general review of the literature I am going to discuss these two influential theories and their subsequent developments in relation to the two major elements of my conceptual framework, boundaries and speech genres. The interaction between these two ideas is located specifically around 'talk': talk across boundaries, talk as participation, talk as support, talk as engagement in learning and work. Both boundaries and talk are considered to be significant in terms of providing the necessary conditions for learning to take place, in Engeström's terms a view of

expansive learning that '*puts horizontal and inter-organizational dimensions of learning*'(2004:4) at the centre of attention.

### **2.1.2 Cultural-Historical Activity Theory**

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as developed by Engeström (2001;2004) examines activity systems which take shape over lengthy periods of time. These activity systems are composed of multiple points of view with divisions of labour creating a variety of positions for the participants which may be contradictory. Contradictions within the system accumulate over time and produce both disturbances and innovations, with the possibility of expansive transformations and new modes of activity. Engeström locates the activity system at the level of the organization, although this should not be read as limited to a single organization as activity systems can operate between organizations. This is illustrated in his work with hospitals and care services where the patient's care agreement is the centre of the system and other participants (health service workers, hospital workers, family members) make up the activity system. Expansive learning occurs at a system level and can emerge spontaneously through the use of innovations to resolve contradictions in activity systems. Expansive learning can also be facilitated by particular pedagogic interventions (for example the Change Laboratory) which use specific instruments to facilitate learning across boundaries within and between systems.

Boundary crossing is particularly important for Engeström who argues that CHAT has elaborated on this concept in relation to the importance of dialogue, multi-voicedness, boundary objects and perspectives. Engeström particularly refers to the concept of 'third space' referencing Gutierrez (1995) (Engeström 2001:135)

*'to account for events in classroom discourse where the seemingly self-sufficient worlds and scripts of the teacher and the students occasionally meet and interact to form new meanings that go beyond the evidence limits of both.'* (2001:135/136).

This 'third space' for Gutierrez is where there is a hybridity between official and other classroom dialogue – on the rare occasions when the parallel lives and talk of the children and teacher collide. This can be reconceptualised as a mix of primary and secondary speech genres, the primary speech genres of the children's lives and the secondary genres of the educational discourse of the teacher's language in the classroom. This creates a possible site of expansive learning for activity systems, in this case the school.

Engeström emphasizes that the concept of boundary crossing draws attention to horizontal learning rather than conceptualizing learning as a 'vertical' process'. Engeström has a rather different perspective here than the concept of vertical and horizontal knowledge as proposed by Bernstein (1999) where vertical knowledge is increasingly abstract and horizontal knowledge increasingly specialist. For Engeström the focus is *learning*, the development of new horizontal knowledge does not mean the advent of new specialisms (Bernstein) but the generation of new collaborations and configurations of knowledge (Engeström 2004). Learning here is traced through '*concept development*' and a series of 'sideways moves' (through dialogue) which are negotiated by participants on both sides of organizational boundaries in order to implement new practices.

Engeström has also suggested that 'knotworking' is a characteristic of expertise in new work environments in response to the demands of rapid change. He describes this as '*a temporal and spatial trajectory of successive task-oriented combinations of people and artifacts*' that combine and are redrawn to cope with constantly changing tasks. Engeström draws from Actor Network Theory here as he considers that '*The community of the expert activity system is not any more limited to the members of an institution*' (2004:161) and that the object of the system develops a spatial-temporal trajectory that the researcher could follow through '*cognitive trails*' evident

within discourse (2004:152). Moving objects across boundaries and focussing on dialogue to enable people to share different perspectives form two core foundations of Engeström's work.

There are, however, problems in applying CHAT to schools as workplaces.

Expansive learning results from the resolution of system contradictions in pursuit of a common purpose. The main purpose of the school is to achieve learning for pupils, measured in terms of the external government performance measures which frame a competitive environment for schools via pupil numbers and, ultimately, funding. The development of leaders is a secondary issue which may have been instigated by the individual or by national policy, but has not (unless there is a crisis in leadership) arisen from contradictions within the school as an activity system.

Within schools a number of activity systems can be identified on different levels and with a different focus. In terms of educational leadership it seems that the 'system' is the national programme for developing school leaders rather than the individual school, and a number of pedagogic devices have been set up at this level to facilitate dialogue about leadership (e.g. NCSL online learning communities). The problem here is that CHAT does not deal with the issue of access to these networks by individuals at a local level or the individual's work situation. A second issue is that of expertise in rapidly changing work environments. Leadership expertise is different in nature from teaching expertise (e.g. Advanced Skills Teachers). Although teaching expertise may be included, leadership covers a different, more extensive, spatial territory, range of interactions and body of knowledge. I suggest that learning to lead a whole school might more appropriately be considered a new sphere of learning rather than the development of teaching expertise.

Using Beach's lateral and collateral transitions illustrates this point. When learning to lead is a lateral transition, there is an implied trajectory which suggests a shift in bounded spaces. In Nespor's (1994) terms the disciplinary network and connections

that are active are different to those of teachers in the classroom. In particular, areas of responsibility are expanded and implicate new power relationships (monitoring planning, assessment and delivery of the work of other teachers, financial/resource planning, governance). On the other hand, learning teaching expertise implies collateral transitions, new knowledge may be brought into the classroom or school through boundary crossing but the bounded space and responsibilities of the teacher do not substantially change. The networks and relationships that the teacher has access to may expand and contribute to practice, but the nature of these spaces within which these networks and relationships are operative remains the same in terms of the roles and power relationships in play.

It is also difficult to consider schools to be rapidly changing environments. Whilst there might be policy initiatives which are experienced as a pressure to change many aspects of school environments they remain stable and characterized by historical influences (cf. Grace 1995 on school year, school day, traditions etc). There is a tension between the pressure for rapid change towards the remodelling of schools and the established history of schooling embodied in school buildings, recognisable roles and through successive generations of children's education. In some ways the school environment of today would be easily recognised by those attending the study school in the early 1900s. Despite these comments my aim here has not been to discuss CHAT per se as a theory for investigating workplace learning, but to draw attention to the way in which CHAT highlights the importance of contradictions, boundaries and dialogue as crucial concepts in developing workplace learning theory.

### 2.1.3 From Communities of Practice to the expansive-restrictive learning continuum.

Communities of practice, a concept developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) and subsequently developed by Wenger (1998; 2002), adopts a view of learning as socially situated and embedded in practices. The term communities of practice has been widely adopted in the education, business management and sociological worlds and has particular attractions for education as teachers consider themselves a member of a community of practice both within and across schools. This concept taps into the issues of identity, unionization of teachers, teachers as professionals etc. The key dimensions of a community of practice are mutual engagement in actions, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. Learning takes place through negotiation of meaning in each of these practices and activities. Learners move along a trajectory from novice (apprentice) to expert (mastery) and learning is achieved through participation in the practices of the community. The apprenticeship is the model of learning and teaching here. Boundaries are central to Wenger's work on learning and boundaries not only define and constitute communities of practice through the key definitions of a community and the development of a community identity over time, but also operate as particular and significant sites of learning. Boundary objects and negotiations with others outside the community of practice can facilitate the introduction of new practices and therefore new knowledge and new learning.

Wenger suggests that '*boundaries are places to cultivate in order to foster learning*' (1998:255) and the learning occurs through boundary processes that he outlines in some detail. Boundaries operate as both a source of disconnection from other communities and a mode of connection through boundary objects and brokers (people). Brokers, the people negotiating connections with others at the boundary '*enable coordination, and – if they are good brokers – open new possibilities for*



*meaning*' (Wenger 1998:109). Wenger goes on to identify three possible types of boundary encounter (one-on-one; immersion; delegations) and three further types of connection provided by practice (boundary practices; overlaps; peripheries). As an example, to help to relate these ideas back to expansive development opportunities for leaders, a 'placement' opportunity implies boundary crossing to another setting. As an experience for individual leaders this would be characterized by Wenger as an immersive boundary encounter where the individual was provided with a peripheral experience in another organization:

*'People who are not on a trajectory to become full members' [...] 'The idea is to offer them various forms of casual but legitimate access to a practice without subjecting them to the demands of full membership. This kind of peripherality can include observation, but it can also go beyond mere observation and involve actual forms of engagement.'* (ibid:117).

Wenger theorises that boundaries and peripheries are woven together, but argues that boundaries are essentially a discontinuity between the outside and the inside, whereas peripheries are a connection to outsiders or newcomers. Peripheries are, however, managed by the community of practice and may act as an area where outsiders are 'in' but managed and prevented from moving to the centre of the community of practice.

The communities of practice concept has been widely critiqued, adapted, built on and combined with other explanatory theories. In view of the dialogic approach that I am taking I want to draw upon Barton and Tusting's (2005) work here. This brings together a collection of articles which propose that *'framings provided by theories of language, literacy, discourse and power are central to understandings of the dynamics of communities of practice'* (2005:6) and build upon Wenger's work in order to do this. In particular, Tusting (2005) argues that language is a central element of 'practices', participation and the negotiation of meaning and that CoP explanations require a more fully developed theory of language. Whilst Tusting

adopts a critical social linguistics approach (CDA drawing on Fairclough) to connect local language to power relationships and the broader social world other examples in this volume draw on a variety of language theories (e.g. Creese, 2005, speech communities; Rock, 2005, sociolinguistics). Some contributors go on to incorporate CHAT alongside language to highlight the contradictions within communities. The introduction of a theory of language (in its broadest sense covering talk, texts and objects of communication) can be seen as offering possibilities for both a micro analysis of how learning takes place through communication and negotiation and the inclusion of wider discourses which implicate power and policy. Barton and Tusting do not, however, suggest which approach to discourse sits best with a communities of practice analysis.

Whilst incorporating the discursive element can illuminate the detail of activities Fuller and Unwin (2004) have built upon the communities of practice idea in a different way. Focussing on the workplace as a site of socially situated learning they expand on Wenger's ideas to develop the communities of practice concept to suit modern workplace characteristics (for example, contracting out, flexibility, routine and knowledge-based companies). They, along with the other participants of the TLRP research network 'Improving Incentives to Learning in the Workplace'<sup>4</sup> aimed to integrate the *'macro-level analysis with the characteristics of the learning environment'* (Evans et al. 2006:10) and to incorporate research work in the area of individual dispositions and tacit skills as an influence on working environments. They extend the communities of practice idea in a number of ways:

- examining the significance of individual learning biographies in relation to organizational opportunities (referencing Billett's (2004b) work on organizational affordances and individual dispositions and work on learning biographies by Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004)

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<sup>4</sup> Teaching and Learning Research Programme established by the Economic and Social Research Council

- looking at the relationship between educational institutions and communities of practice (i.e. prior and subsequent off-the-job learning)
- considering the nature of learning for workers who are already experienced members of a community, continuing learning and innovation of knowledge.

They suggest that organizational environments can be assessed by using the expansive-restrictive learning continuum which has two broad categories of features:

*'Those which arise from understandings about the organizational context and culture (for example, work organization, job design, control, and distribution of knowledge and skills); and those which relate to understandings of how employees learn (through engaging in different forms of participation).'* (2006:41)

In relation to teachers' learning environments this model was applied to work by Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) who investigated two departments in a secondary school. Hodkinson (P) with Evans et al. develop a framework of expansive and restrictive learning environments for teachers using this model and suggest that a more expansive learning environment can be created for teachers when there are opportunities for *'significant informal contacts, exchanges, and discussions, access to each other's lessons and work, and team-teaching and team-working'* (Evans et al. 2006:55) They go on to mention opportunities for *'collaborative learning, boundary crossing and involvement in work teams beyond the department'* (2006:56). What is significant about this analysis is the reiteration of ideas about boundary crossing and dialogue as necessary conditions in which the best learning can occur. In some ways the critique that Barton and Tusting make above can be made here – the specific issue of how learning occurs through language and discourse remains outside the frame of analysis. I would add that the way in which boundaries are conceptualized also remains undertheorized, particularly in view of the significance of boundary crossing as a contributor to expansive learning opportunities.

Boundaries, discourse and dialogue then, emerge as interrelated and key concepts relevant to the examination of workplace learning. However, Edwards and Fowler (2007) sound a cautionary note and make the point that categorizing and mapping research areas in itself creates boundaries and draws attention to particular sorts of knowledge. They comment that

*'Margins, third spaces, boundary zones and in-between spaces have been conceptualised as ways of framing alternatives to the powerful discourses and discourses of power of the centre. However, there is a sense in which these concepts have been as much subject to the boundary-making of conceptualising practices, as they have challenged the boundaries themselves.'* (2007:108)

One consequence of this has been the focus on expansive learning as a horizontal discourse that works *across* boundaries. Far less attention has been paid to boundaries as constitutive of immersive learning, perhaps wrongly associated with vertical discourses and powerful disciplinary knowledge. A second problem, as I have indicated above, is the use of the term 'boundary' rather generically and uncritically in research (Edwards and Fowler (2007) suggest unreflexively) in relation to learning. In the following sections I explore a variety of ways in which boundaries can be understood and, by using the idea of speech genres, suggest that when boundaries, discourse and dialogue are conceptualized together it is possible to focus on the issues of spatiality, time and dialogue as both generating boundaries and offering opportunities for learning through the fluidity and interrelationship between speech genres. This different perspective uses the Bakhtinian idea of centripetal and centrifugal forces to retain sight of the powerful discourses of the centre through looking at their play in local interactions.

## 2.2 Boundaries, spaces and genres – elements of a conceptual framework

Boundary making, the making of distinctions between things, is a basic human condition and Zerubavel (1991) explains this as essential to the making of the social world. He elucidates how boundaries are socially constructed

*‘our entire social order rests on the fact that we regard these fine lines as if they were real. Things assume a distinctive identity only through being differentiated from other things, and their meaning is always a function of the particular mental compartment in which we place them. Examining how we draw lines will therefore reveal how we give meaning to our environment as well as to ourselves’ (1991:7)*

Boundaries classify the world and this is a normative process that is socially constructed and *‘accomplished largely through language’* (ibid 1991:8). Bakhtin’s framework of heteroglossia and speech genres demonstrates the way in which we continually achieve this. Whilst Bakhtin focuses on the multiplicity of boundaries between the self/other in linguistics the concept of boundaries has also been used in sociology. This can be traced back to Durkheim and Weber and forward through Bourdieu, Hall and Lamont (Lamont and Molnar 2002). Work on social groups and organizational boundaries draws on this sociological tradition. In psychology the rise of identity as a focus for social psychological research has brought the term ‘boundary work’ to attention, emphasizing the negotiated and actively constructed element involved in establishing boundaries around groups and individuals (Ashforth et al. 2000 discussed earlier, Allen 2001, Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003). To add detail to my conceptual framework I first discuss the nature of boundaries, then examine the how the related concept of spaces can be linked to both genres and boundaries to bring these two concepts together to generate an understanding of learning at work.

### 2.2.1 The nature of boundaries.

How should the properties of boundaries be conceptualized? Pellow (1996)

suggests that a boundary may be:

- Physical, social, temporal, conceptual, and /or symbolic.
- Permeable and negotiable.
- Created, maintained, elaborated, and dismantled.
- Separating and unifying; divisive and inclusive; definitional, invisible, transforming, and transformative. (1996:1)

She emphasizes, along with Lamont and Molnar (2002), that it is the relationship between these elements that is important and that needs further research. In their overview of boundaries in the social sciences Lamont and Molnar suggest that boundaries have been conceptualized as symbolic and social, yet the relationship between the two '*most often remains implicit*' (2002:169). They describe boundaries as '*part of the classical conceptual tool-kit of social scientists*' but add that as yet there has not been an attempt to synthesize the concept. Both they and Heracleous (2004) suggest that not only should the properties of boundaries be investigated more fully, but that the nature of the relationship between the symbolic, the social and the material properties of boundaries requires theoretical work. Specifically, they suggest that the properties of boundaries and the mechanisms that exist for building or dissolving boundaries are fruitful areas for research and theory development.

The material and physical nature of boundaries has received more recent attention in geography and the built environment ( Lawrence 1996; Van Houtum et al. 2005). Here the idea of boundaries as creating spaces and acting as a link connects to the spatial aspects in social theory (Latour 2005; Lefebvre 1991). Boundaries, conceptualized as borders around a territory, give access to the idea of spaces and the power relations *within* them. In addition borders can readily act as zones or

hybrid areas in their own right. In respect of national identity Lamont and Molnar suggest that

*'Borders provide most individuals with a concrete, local, and powerful experience of the state, for this is the site where citizenship is strongly enforced'* (2002:183)

This aspect of boundary is particularly important when considering specific institutions and communities, such as schools, where there are clear physical boundaries between the community members and other areas of social life, and the physical boundaries are marked by symbolic/social boundaries such as social membership, dress codes and roles. Within these physical boundaries, marked by the borders of the school territory, there are particular configurations of space and power as McGregor, discussing spatiality and schooling, identifies with a quotation from a head of department in her school study describing *'the corridors of power', the SMT corridor, between [the Head's] and [senior teachers'] offices. It is a significant location.'* (McGreggor 2003:359)

The way that organizational boundaries are active in constituting spaces and organizational relations is therefore important. These boundaries, as Paulsen and Hernes (2003) illustrate, emerge at the individual, group and organizational level and are essentially dynamic. Hernes develops this theme and argues that boundaries are central to organizations rather than peripheral as all *'change processes are about creating, moving or consolidating boundaries'* and that boundaries are composite in substance and in continual need of construction and reconstruction (Hernes 2004:10). To avoid the use of binary oppositions in considering organizational boundaries (inside/ outside), and the simplification of boundaries as functional devices (political, authority, identity, function, task etc), Hernes proposes a two dimensional framework, one dimension reflecting the process that is circumscribed and the other the influence of the boundary on an organization. This framework was used to add detail to the way in which boundaries

were conceptualized in relation to leadership learning, extending and adding depth to the more general research questions identified in chapter 1.

**Table 1 - Hernes (2004:13) Framework for interpreting organizational boundaries with a research question focus on leadership learning**

Area of influence Process	<b><i>Mental boundaries</i></b>	<b><i>Social boundaries</i></b>	<b><i>Physical boundaries</i></b>
<b><i>Ordering</i></b>	What are the main ideas about leadership in the school?		To what extent does the physical structure impact on leadership and learning?
<b><i>Distinction</i></b>	In what way are the concepts used different from those of other groups in the school?	How do leadership relationships and power impact on other leaders and staff in the school?	What types of relationships are there with other organizations and networks?
<b><i>Threshold</i></b>		Who can belong to the leadership group in the school?	

Before moving on I want to clarify what Hernes means by '*mental boundaries*' here. Hernes considers shared ideas and concepts as being composed of '*theory and meaning*' (2004:13) and he explicitly draws on Zerubavel's ideas about meanings having socially constructed distinctions which are often '*fuzzy gradations*' in practice. Using the term '*mental boundaries*' does not imply that knowledge is a matter of individual cognition, Hernes takes a social psychological perspective here following Weick (1979). However, one area that Hernes does not explicitly include in his framework is the element of time/space and it is this issue that I develop next.



## 2.2.2 Boundaries as constitutive - the emergence of spaces

From a sociological perspective boundaries are not only shaped by context and cultural repertoires, but as they are actively constructed, are also influential in the shaping of cultural contexts. Boundaries around cultural contexts (and collective or group identities) are productive of the culture or collective identity being formed at the same time as boundaries are being constructed around the group. The boundary becomes constitutive of the group or culture, and dynamic in that the relationships between the continuously constructed and reconstructed boundaries impact directly on the identity of the community itself. Lamont and Molnar (2002) again,

*'The notion of boundaries is crucial for analyzing how social actors construct groups as similar and different and how it shapes their understanding of their responsibilities toward such groups' (2002:187).*

This closely connects with a discourse analytic view of the discursive work accomplished at boundaries, particularly in terms of identities (Allen 2001 on nurses' work identities).

Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) draw on this view of boundaries when they discuss 'group style' as a mediating element between wider cultural influences and the individual. Group style is evident in language, voices and boundary construction at the group level even where groups may, in other ways, be assumed to have similar characteristics. These discursive spaces have similarities with Bakhtin's secondary genre of 'social languages', yet are more specifically located at the level of the group. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005) illustrate this when they identify two different learning cultures in two different departments at the same school, which can be understood as different group styles and, from my perspective, as different genres of communication and learning being used within one organization.

Harris (2000) reiterates this point and goes on to make the connection with space, suggesting that boundaries are '*structuring metaphors of space and location*' that are complex, ambiguous and above all, not static.

*'Boundary-work is thus the active, socially constructed process through which boundaries and spaces are continually enacted, inscribed and negotiated.'* (2000 my underline).

The notion of the boundary becoming a performative venture rather than an external constraint or a symbolic/social/material aspect to be traversed opens up issues of space and the idea of boundaries as connectors rather than borders. The introduction of space as a twin concept with boundary allows a shift in perspective from boundary crossing from one setting/context to another as productive of learning to a more creative and imaginative space for learning where spaces can be conceptualized in a variety of ways. Physical boundaries connect space with place and Scollon and Scollon (2003) argue that the discursive is situated *in* place and is consequential for the interactive order. Thinking about genres as located in and constituting spaces (physical, discursive and conceptual) offers a way to add a theory of language to the concept of boundary crossing and it is to genres that I turn next.

### **2.2.3 Genres, space and time – structuring elements for the heteroglossic world**

Whilst the heteroglossia contains a '*roiling mass of languages*' (Holquist 2002:69) these are identifiable as genres marked by '*relatively stable types*' of utterances, even if at the point of expression these utterances have their own individual evaluative note. However, Bakhtin goes on to say that an area of activity contains '*an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more complex*' (1986:60). Here the structuring elements of time and space become relevant as particular speech genres develop differential boundaries. For example, the location of particular professional genres

with both the situation of utterance (for lawyers the language of court taking place *in* a court), and the solidifying of the language through its continual historical use, tends to harden boundaries around this speech genre and 'fix' the thematic, compositional and language styles within it. Speech genres about educational development, particularly of adults, have a range of locational ties (universities, colleges, workplaces, unions, voluntary sector locations) and different histories of language in each place. The boundaries between and around these heterogeneous speech genres as an area of activity tend to be softer and more permeable.

Sandywell (1998) argues that these structuring elements of the heteroglossia – time and space – are aspects of Bakhtin's writings that warrant further attention. He suggests that speech genres are closely associated to the '*chronotopic organization of meaning*' (1998:196), that human experience in the world is an essentially historical one and that Bakhtin's ideas about '*grand time*,' '*small time*' and the chronotopes of narrative are essential to understanding the dialogical principle. This is because any utterance uses words and texts that have already existed in the past. Their past meaning is necessarily reinterpreted as they are used in the current utterance, which also faces forward to the addressee. Sandywell suggests that '*genres provide the deep structures which schematize reality*' (ibid:203) through these past utterances and that genres have different chronotopes of temporality within them. The implications of this are that particular genres resist or facilitate particular ways of referencing the past, present and future, or may exclude or privilege particular forms of textual or verbal dialogic encounters. These different boundaries around genres also indicate that there are different capacities for change.

Current commentary on genre theory and organizational communication, (Yates and Orlikowski 1992, 2002; Orlikowski and Yates 1994) has drawn on literary theory, socio-linguistics and Bakhtinian ideas about genres to suggest that there are

recognized genres of communication within organizations – meetings, texts and electronic communications. Within meeting genres Yates and Orlikowski (2002) identify the structuring elements of the genre as preserving and reinforcing '*existing communicative practices around meeting logistics, agendas, and minutes*' (2002:31) but they suggest that genres are mutable features of organizational communication. They can change and incorporate new topics/subjects and ideas or new technologies, but the form remains essentially the same. Following Bakhtin, Yates and Orlikowski make the point that organizations have a repertoire of communication genres available to the workers within them, and that these are habitually enacted by the workers within an organization. Genres have socially recognizable purposes, common characteristics of form, (face to face interaction, e-mails etc) and are organized with temporal expectations. They suggest that

*'a genre established within a particular community serves as an institutionalized template for social interaction – an organizing structure – that influences the ongoing communicative action of members through their use of it within and across their communities'* (2002:15).

Maybin (2006) adds to this the importance of time in establishing institutional genres until they are '*knitted into institutional practices with a strong institutionally derived evaluative framework for judging individuals and their actions*' (2006:52).

Genres can shape, but are not determinant of, everyday interaction, and here Yates and Orlikowski, like Maybin, draw on Bakhtin to suggest that individuals have agency and creativity in the way that they use genres. Genres in an organizational repertoire offer possibilities for individuals, who may draw on different genres, and there is the possibility of change through the interaction of these genres with other primary and secondary genres, each genre having differing histories, locations with place and chronotropic characteristics. This can lead to the emergence of '*composite genres*' (Rockwell 2000), '*hybrid genres*' Maybin (2006) and new genres within the organization (Yates and Orlikowski 2002).

The heteroglossic world is therefore not only shaped by tensions between centripetal and centrifugal forces but also the way that time/space and social understandings are embedded in genres. These '*chronotopes of identity are embedded in the collective narratives of powerful institutions and organizations*' (Sandywell 1999:206) yet because the individual is always in a dialogical encounter with the heteroglossia and its many genres this means that individual relations with the social languages of professionalism, education and learning for career development are immediate and personal. The dialogical capacity for each individual to develop an evaluative accent is important, but it seems to me that genres have differential potentials for change and for allowing the expression of that evaluative accent through talk in particular situations. This has implications for people working in educational organizations such as schools where there are close associations between particular genres and the institutional boundaries (material, social and symbolic) that have developed over long periods of time.

In order to understand how individual dialogic relations with possible genres might work in a particular school, a clearer understanding about the nature of the boundaries in play within organizations and between primary and secondary genres is needed. Research into organizational discourse has tended to emphasize either one or the other of these aspects, for example, studies of institutional talk take differing approaches to the issue of talk as constituting organizational relations and talk *in* organizations that is a feature of the context. (Alvesson and Kärreman; 2000 Drew and Heritage 1992). However, boundaries between primary and secondary speech genres cannot be reduced to a simplistic inside/outside dualism which denies the fluidity of Bakhtin's heteroglossia and the dynamic possibilities of the dialogic world.

## 2.3 Channelling engagements with the heteroglossia of educational leadership

Boundaries around speech genres are strengthened as their monologic tendencies increase. As their position in terms of location and history becomes increasingly stable the language forms within them also become established and less likely to change. Speech genres with strong boundaries are also likely to develop dominance and a strong authoritative voice – the enactment of power relations in the social situation. Yet these boundaries established around a speech genre are also constitutive as they unify, regulate and contain its use. These ideas about the patterned nature of speech genres and the consequences for boundaries between them become especially important when considering the relationship between speech genres and institutional life within organizations such as schools. The nature of organizational boundaries can be seen as both a constituting feature and a consequence of the boundaries of speech genres. For example, the material properties of boundaries are often taken as obvious and unquestioned; the physical nature of the building, objects and artefacts, even the constraints of time are deemed immutable, yet these material properties are constantly manipulated, dispersed and subject to change. Lawrence (1996), for example, has illustrated how new judicial boundaries can change the designation of private and public spaces and that this materially impacts on people's behaviour. This illustrates the issue of power in relation to changes to the nature of boundaries and how one genre – that of legal property rights – can redefine material boundaries.

Bakhtin's idea of the monologic, centripetal and authoritative voice in speech genres can be useful here in understanding the relative status of genres at particular times. Genres cross-cut the heteroglossic social languages which make up the broad discourses of educational leadership, Bakhtin specifically suggests that these social languages '*sometimes coincide with, and sometimes depart from, the stratification into genres*' (1981:289), and these tensions offer an ongoing tension in the way that

different genres identified within the use of the one term. I illustrate this by developing two possible genres (although there are certainly others) for the idea of the headteacher which illustrate how power and chronotopes of time/space are important considerations. Genres are not 'types' of headship, but could be described as groupings of ideas that we can draw upon when using the term 'headteacher'. Using Bakhtin's approach it is possible to see how both genres have a different monologic authority and how the boundaries between them might begin to blur. The permeability between them, though, may be easier to establish in terms of knowledges (pedagogies, children's interests) than the issues of individual location and time frames. It is here that Bakhtin suggests that the deep currents of time and space become established as a feature of a genre, developing firmer boundaries around the older ideas about headship than those of the centripetal genre of modernization.

**Table 2 - The case of the headteacher, genres and time**

The genre of headteacher as organizational leader:

This genre has a theme of performativity, remodelling and application of government agendas for the national curriculum and reform of schools. The authority and power of the headteacher is understood from a Weberian perspective as delegated from government via policy guidance backed by legal power. The chronotope of space is a move to uniformity over dispersed locations and the integration of local services through federations and joint provision. The chronotope of time within the genre is linked to government performance targets of annual, five and ten year planning.

The genre of headteacher as an individual leader and teaching professional.

This genre is themed by a concern for children and their education, issues of best practice in teaching and an established position in relation to the local community. The authority and power of the headteacher derive from their expertise, but also from the consent and support of the local community and the staff of the school. The chronotope of space is the local and individual school building and the chronotope of time is the long history of headteachership stretching back to the early C20th (Grace 1995) and into the future for multiple generations.

Within each of these genres particular types of action and knowledge are emphasised and each has implications for the way in which headteachers develop their identity. In the first, technical skills are embodied and transferable between contexts, a linear approach linking the implementation of specific skills to the achievement of planned change. In the second, there is an emphasis on personal and professional values and the quality of relationships, leadership as a relational process, relying on a high level of interpersonal skills and emotional commitment (Ogawa and Bossert 1995; Russell 2003;).

Both these genres, and many others, are available to leaders and teachers both inside and outside their place of work. What is of interest, in terms of learning to be an educational leader, is the way that the organizational boundaries of a primary school might be significant in directing teachers to particular genres present within the social languages of school leadership. The way that the genres available within an organization might channel learners through facilitating particular secondary genres is important, and has a direct relationship to the way that primary and secondary genres are called upon within the organization. This impacts on each learner's dialogic experiences on a day-to-day basis and their developing evaluative note. The repertoire of genres available within an organization and the way that boundaries constitute spaces for learning are important and, together, boundaries, spaces and genres are a useful way to think about this.

### **2.3.1 Genres, space and learning**

The connection between genres and knowledge is clearly made by Kain (2005) who illustrates this by looking at the issue of transfer of knowledge across disciplinary genres. She worked with a 'text' under construction and recorded meetings and interviews with the people involved in devising the final text. She categorises three



functions of genre: instrumental, metacommunicative and social/political (2005:379) and clearly expresses how knowledge and genres are connected.

*'The uses of genres in specific domains become part of the tacit knowledge of community members that often is transparent to participants in situated activities and difficult for outsiders to understand.'* (2005:377).

Learning how to become a member of a community means that some of this tacit knowledge must become available to newcomers and, as Kain points out, genres in themselves may contain scaffolding elements that *'use forms and conventions to assist readers in understanding the purposes of the text'* (2005:405). Kain also points to the way that learning within and between genres was structured in her interdisciplinary study. The group of practitioners in Kain's study focussed on the instrumental functions of a text prior to its metacommunicative and social/political functions. It seems possible that for new users of an institutional genre that this aspect of 'learning' a genre would potentially be significant.

In relation to this learning I want to mention some particular uses of space here. Firstly the notion of space as *'liminal'* or *'in-between'* (Solomon et al. 2006; Sturdy et al. 2006), neither being in the domain of work or leisure and thus allowing the participants of the space to engage in dialogue in ways that are outside their usual work role and which is not limited to work concerns. The suggestion here is that this is a space more conducive to learning as it is also an opportunity to reflect and to express ideas which might not be acceptable in the work environment. This space is generally physically defined (Solomon et al.'s staffroom, cars; restaurants, dining rooms) but allows space for speech genres that are different from those regularly used in the work environment. Here the play between secondary genres of organizational talk relating to work and primary genres of personal comment, home and individual life can intermingle and the boundaries between them become fluid.

Nespor (2002), McGregor (2003; 2004) and, from an 'outsider' perspective, Kostogriz and Peeler (2007) move the analysis of spatiality in schooling on from the idea of '*in-between*' spaces to one of particular spaces as intersections, or a knot in a network of social practices that extend in time and space beyond that particular site. This extension is 'beyond' as in previously, far away, and in the sense of extending into the future. This connects closely to Engestrom's idea of expertise as '*knotworking*' connecting people together, but here extends to '*flows of ideas, technologies and discourses in society*' (McGregor 2003:369). McGregor goes on to suggest that communities '*draw on knowledge and discourses from distant space-times and are themselves ways of ordering or configuring spatiality.*' (2004: 368). This closely connects to Kain's (2005) idea about genres as structuring knowledge and I suggest that one of the ways that this can be researched is through examining the use of different speech genres and their chronotopes of space time relations.

Space is used as a metaphor by Gronn and Lacey (2004) when they discuss the idea of '*positioning space*' where aspirant leaders can begin to imagine themselves into leadership roles and '*explore potential and possible selves*'. This begins the process of what Ashforth (2001 above) is referring to as the integration of roles through anticipatory socialization, but is an essentially private and imagined space rather than one colonized by work or government agendas (Gronn and Lacey 2004:406). Taking a Bakhtinian view, this is a space for internally persuasive dialogue, allowing reflection on observed and experienced leadership and enabling an imaginative future where the individual's own ideas and potential actions can be rehearsed. Here the individual can develop their own evaluative note in relation to both centripetal and centrifugal forces within the many genres that they are exposed to. Here the individual begins to situate themselves within the heteroglossia.

From a Bakhtinian perspective all of these elements occur concurrently and simultaneously in the active engagement between people and in their understanding

of the world around them. A Bakhtinian interpretation of discourse not only allows the connections with 'distant' things (Nespor 1994) at a local level, but also allows room for innovation and creativity for individuals through their dialogic relation with the world. Bakhtin's use of spatiality and the possibility of distance between the 'self' and the 'other' (through the internal dialogic self) produces a capacity to develop new meaning and innovative ideas (Hermans 1999). This connects the dialogic relation with learning and new ideas for individuals as they position and reposition themselves in response to changes in situation, interactions and over time. What I am interested in here is the way in which this positioning is shaped by the genres in use within the organization and the way that access to genres outside the organization is managed through boundary crossing.

The concept of the dialogic self also allows me to consider the issue of boundaries as constructing spaces for learning where the learner immerses themselves in learning through reflection and reflective practice (Boud and Walker 2002; Schon 2002) either individually through the dialogic self, or collectively through group interaction. Positioning immersive learning as an alternative to expansive learning avoids some of the negative implications of the term 'restrictive' and more clearly indicates my view that learning of some sort is taking place within workplaces which may be at the 'restrictive' end of Fuller and Unwin's (2004) continuum. A Bakhtinian view of discourse therefore enables me to examine learning across boundaries between people, ideas, contexts and in connection to the public sphere as well as the learning that takes place through bounded spaces for reflection, internal coaching and mentoring and the imaginative components of Gronn and Lacey's (2004) anticipatory socialization.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined my position in relation to the commentary and research about learning, discourse and boundaries. I have taken a particular perspective that draws on Bakhtin's notion of the world as essentially dialogic in nature, yet with structuring elements of space and time that shape an individual's experience and their relationship with the heteroglossia of discourses available to them. I argue that boundaries constituted by and around speech genres are important to understanding how learning can take place in the workplace and suggest that the concept of boundary requires exploration. Boundary crossing and dialogue emerged as key concepts in the workplace learning literature and re-examining the socially constructed nature of boundaries focussed attention on boundaries and their association with space – time relations. I have shown how the concepts of boundary, space and genres work together to form a framework to help me to think about the ways that individuals learn to lead in the workplace.

This chapter is located in relation to my own position in as a researcher and outlines the particular genres of commentary that I engaged with. This theoretical and conceptual work discusses discourse and learning from a particular perspective. Those becoming leaders within a primary school are positioned very differently in relation to the heteroglossia, and exposed to a different network of connections to both primary and secondary genres. Before shifting perspective to the workplace and going on to investigate these secondary genres I conclude my introduction to the research by moving on to the methods which I used to investigate the learning by leaders in the workplace.

## Chapter 3

### The researcher in the school – an intermittent ethnography

*“The well-informed citizen finds himself placed in a domain which belongs to an infinite number of possible frames of reference. There are no pre-given ready-made ends, no fixed border lines within which he can look for shelter.” (Alfred Schutz 1976:130 [1946])*

Alfred Schutz wrote a series of classic essays in the 1940s entitled ‘*The Stranger*’, ‘*The Homecomer*’ and ‘*The Well Informed Citizen*’. (Schutz 1976 [1944,1944,1946]).

The ‘stranger’ is frequently invoked in the world of ethnographic research. In this role the ethnographer enters the world of a new group of people, and spends time understanding their customs and ways, until total absorption in the community renders this way of life normal and unquestioned. The stranger’s tale is frequently followed up with cautions for the researcher against becoming too involved in the field and losing perspective. The ‘homecomer’ sees work and family anew, old ways familiar yet strange. I had not been ‘away’ and was planning to work in my local area, in a field that is familiar to me. Could I adopt the stance of the ‘well informed citizen’ and combine Schutz’s four ideal types for transmitting socially derived knowledge, ‘*the eyewitness, the insider, the analyst, and the commentator*’ (1976:133)? It seems to me that the role of the ethnographic researcher combines and invokes each of these ideal types at different points in the thesis – eyewitness data and the gathering of insider views, the analysis of the data and the commentary reported in the final thesis. In this chapter I describe how I continually negotiated my boundaries as a researcher as the research progressed and gradually came to ‘fix’ the borders and lines of my inquiry. This fixing framed the vision for the eyewitness; fashioned the character and limits of the researcher as insider; shaped the analytic

concerns and methods and ultimately formed the trajectory of the final writing for this thesis.

In section 1.5 I explained that an ethnographic approach to a single case study aligned closely with my Bakhtinian approach to research. This approach also positioned me within a long history of ethnographic research in schools and the somewhat less extensive ethnographic work researching the workplace. Within schools studies have tended to focus on teaching in the classroom; fewer studies consider teachers in the staffroom, and even less leaders in schools. The studies taking a detailed look at how leaders work in schools adopt a range of approaches (Brundrett et al. 2006 narratives; Gronn and Lacey 2004 reflective journals; Hodgkinson and Hodgkinson 2004 biographies; Sinclair 2004 reflection) including, of course, interviews, which as Bryman (2004) points out provide the large majority of qualitative data in leadership studies. The TLRP project (Evans et al 2006) looking at learning at work also adopts a range of approaches that includes workplace ethnographies. Sherman (2005) uses ethnographic methods to illuminate how hotel workers produce symbolic boundaries and Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) draw on a variety of ethnographic studies to support their work on the importance of group styles for local communication. Ethnography, therefore, could provide the variety of tools that would illuminate the detail of boundary crossing and learning in the workplace environment without pre-determining the types of boundaries or learning that might emerge during the study.

In the next sections I describe how I developed my particular ethnographic approach and give an overview of the project located around the discussion of researcher relationships. I reflect on these in relation to my access to the organization and my engagement with the participants. I then explain how the methods used, observation, interviews, concept mapping, documents and pictures worked together

to provide the data for this study and explain the analytic approach that I drew upon to interpret the data. Finally I explain the way in which the research is presented in the thesis.

### **3.1 Framing the vision – the methodological approach**

Using the term 'methodology' to describe my overall philosophy and 'methods' to describe the tools and techniques that I used to conduct the research does not imply a simplistic link between the two. My methodological approach follows on from my conceptual framework outlined in chapters 1 and 2. This is both an ontological position, concerned with the way in which the 'real' is perceived and an epistemological position reflecting knowledge creation for both the participants who are learning and the claims to knowledge made in this thesis. This understanding has implications for the research approach in terms of both data collection and analysis. The different types of data collected are not triangulated in an attempt to frame a 'claim to truth', but to gain a range of perspectives and to develop a range of concepts and interpretations of learning in the workplace that could be discussed with the participants, introducing respondent validity for some interpretations and adding depth to the overall analysis. From an analytic point of view the dialogic interpretation is important as the researcher has a different relationship with these different types of data, and I have drawn on different analytic methods as the study progressed. This moves analysis along a pathway that begins with an ethnographic description that enabled me to assess the workplace as a learning environment (Fuller and Unwin's 2004 expansive –restrictive continuum) and then follows on with an examination of the spaces that offer possibilities for leadership learning through performance. Finally I complete this progressive focussing with a discourse analytic approach based on Bakhtin's genres to look at the way in which learning through talk worked in specific spaces within the workplace. My analysis then steps back from this micro-level analysis and considers the relationship between genres,

spaces and boundaries as consequential for the learning for the different individuals within the school.

I use the term *intermittent ethnography* to reflect the focus on one particular school, but acknowledge the time limited and specific nature of the research interactions focussed on a particular area of work. Jeffrey and Troman (2004) suggest that, rather than the immersion approach of classical anthropological studies, modern ethnographies adopt a range of different time modes. They identify '*compressed time modes*' where ethnographers live with the participants for a short period and a '*recurrent*' mode where the sampling is led by '*temporal phases*', for example an inspection period or examination period in a school. They also suggest a '*selective intermittent time mode*' ethnography, lasting up to two years, which allows a specific approach to data collection and progressive focussing during the study. The selective time in 'the field' is directed by the focus of the study and decisions about the analytical categories. The researcher is selective and specific about the place and people with whom they spend time (Jeffrey and Troman 2004:538 – 542).

Adopting this intermittent approach, the specific area for investigation – learning to lead for adults – enabled me to gain access to particular events such as INSET and the Senior Management Team meetings that seemed to be most relevant to the study. Using the school year as a time frame retained a 'fluid' relationship between data collection and analysis as the study progressed. Jeffrey and Troman comment that '*this mode of research combines specific contexts, respondents' interpretations and researcher-respondent discussion and conversation*' (2004:542). Additionally, I think that access to the school was facilitated by identifying specific adult areas of the school for research attention. I was clearly not assessing teaching in an Ofsted fashion although, as one teacher commented later in the study, there were still concerns about my role in the school. This intermittent time mode was also an effective way to make the study manageable for one researcher.



Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that the researcher cannot step outside the social world. The ethnographer taking a dialogic approach does not try to do so. I had already been invited to 'cross the boundary' to join the five leaders in the SMT, to become a part of their domain however marginal that participation initially seemed to be. As the project progressed it moved into a second more interactive phase, where the participants were using my feedback and reviewing the concept maps to inform their own development. An ethnographic approach was able to embrace this interactive and developmental approach. Ethnography also '*enables direct observation and analysis of behaviours and practices at both the individual and group level*' (Maher and Dixon 2002:42) and this was important as it allowed me to look at both boundary crossing for individuals and learning for the group of leaders within the school. The researcher's reflexive account is a central part of the ethnographic process (Atkinson et al. 2003; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Pole and Morrison 2003) and this not only allowed me to use my reflections on my participation and learning as part of the study but also allowed my focus on boundaries to be maintained.

In summary the ethnography used a range of methods to collect data which included:

- Participant observation during two whole INSET days, one twilight INSET session and seven after school INSET sessions.
- Observation of four year team meetings, seven senior management team meetings and one governor training meeting.
- Participant observation during school lunch hours, before and after meetings and during the school open day for parents.

- Audio recorded interviews during term one with the five senior management team members, and, during term three, one audio recorded and three unrecorded follow up interviews with four of the management team.
- Ten individual concept maps generated by the participants during the recorded interview process (concept mapping is explained in section 3.22).
- Two audio recorded group sessions. One of a SMT meeting made in my absence, and one where the SMT discussed the composite concept maps generated as part of the research process.
- Photographs of the staffroom notice boards taken over a four week period, and photographs of the school grounds.
- Documents, both publically available and internal to the school, collected over the period of the research, e.g. Governor Minutes, School Improvement Plan and Training records for staff.
- Fieldnotes of my visits to the school, telephone conversations, records of emails etc, a commentary on my interactions with all the participants of the school during the research period.

To preserve confidentiality all the names of the participants have been changed in the data presented.

Attending to boundaries, spaces and genres meant that being a participant was important but that my own boundary work was also important. Throughout the research I was engaged in boundary crossing and negotiating access to individuals and meetings. The nature of my participation ranged from what I characterise as *researcher led encounters* to *participant led encounters* and I explore this range of involvement in section 3.2. Before doing so I discuss my access to the school and the staff.

### **3.1.1 The Research Relationship – access and consent**

Many accounts of access underplay the nature of personal connections, yet research often relies on this network to generate 'opportunistic' selection of cases, to ease the way into organizations and to smooth the path of the researcher (Birbili, 1999; Walford, 1999). I had already met the headteacher of Peony Hill School through delivering an Open University training session for a group of local headteachers. Although this was the first time I had met Beth, she was enthusiastic about my research topic and expressed an interest in being further involved, particularly as she had just appointed three new curriculum leaders for the school year beginning the following autumn. (See Figure 1, page 140 for the school structure). As we began to discuss my research and what I wanted to do in the school I acknowledged that the Beth had a different research agenda and I undertook a small questionnaire designed to meet the needs of the school, to some extent putting our relationship on a transactional footing. I designed and administered a questionnaire about staff views of INSET, in particular the in-school programme for the autumn term, and reported the results to the Senior Management Team (the five primary research participants). This work was closely associated with my research, but covered all staff and training generally rather than focussing on leadership issues in depth. I have not included that data within this thesis.

Gatekeepers and sponsors operate at the boundary of organizations in subtly different ways and here the headteacher was both sponsor and gatekeeper. This eased access to the site, but at the same time there were problems in being closely associated with the formal leader of the organization. Access occurred despite the misgivings of her deputy, voiced directly to me, who feared that the research would impose too many time demands on the many new members of staff at the busy beginning of the school year. Reassurances that I would not prove to be an additional demand on staff time or a distraction for new staff were needed, both prior to access and during the initial stages of the research.

Timing was particularly important for this study and in terms of schools Delamont (2002) succinctly points out that

*'the opening days of a new academic year are especially productive for researchers, because rules are explicitly discussed, procedures explained and justified, social relationships are established, and the negotiations leading to a working partnership are begun.'* (2002:102)

In my case it seemed crucial that I begin at the start of the year in tandem with the three new members of the senior leadership team. I was particularly interested in seeing how these people integrated, learned and worked together. It seemed likely that the SMT would be in the process of creating boundaries around themselves. These boundaries would be negotiated, and possibly made more explicit than usual at this 'forming' stage for the group (Tuckman 1965, Tuckman and Jenson 1977) and that this would be an important opportunity to observe and collect evidence about the leaders' boundary construction – before the 'way things are done around here' became normative, unstated and embedded.

As the research progressed and my relationships developed with a wider range of staff members, it became clear that some staff had initially been suspicious of my role in the school. Studying leadership, whilst being closely associated with a particularly strong leader, had difficulties and I worked throughout the study to build relationships with the others in the leadership team. The group feedback meeting where the composite concept maps were presented and discussed (section 3.22) was particularly important in achieving this as it was here that I was able to demonstrate that I could keep individual opinions confidential, and at the same time the research became perceived as offering an opportunity for individuals in the group to voice their views to the headteacher. My continued involvement in the school after this meeting was crucial in developing good relationships with the other leaders. There were also issues of access and boundary with other members of

staff, those outside the leadership team who were not being individually interviewed but who were aware of my research and of my role as a researcher. The issue of 'informed consent', deciding on who the 'participants' of the study might be, and to whom one had responsibilities as a researcher were not so clear cut when one considered the whole organization.

I had been introduced to all the school staff (teaching and non-teaching) at the first day back after the summer break, the first whole school INSET day. I was given 'five minutes' by the headteacher to explain my research to the staff and I made it clear that the focus of the research was adult learning in the workplace, learning to lead, rather than observation or assessment of the teaching of children and that there was an option not to participate. All staff were given an opportunity to ask questions and signed consent forms later that day (Appendix A). However, due to the newness of many staff, and the strength of the recommendation from the headteacher, it seemed unlikely that staff would feel that they could refuse consent at this meeting. I made it clear in informal discussions over the next two days that people were free not to be interviewed and could request that they were not identified or quoted in the research, and this opt out was taken up by the deputy headteacher at a specific point in her interview. All staff were participants in the sense that they were engaged in casual conversations with me and I was participating alongside them in the INSET sessions. Some teachers and Teaching Assistants (CLs) expressed curiosity, but more seemed to accept my presence without question, perhaps helped by the fact that I had joined the staff team alongside six other new members of staff on the first day of work of the year – a new member amongst other new members.

The ongoing nature of access negotiations is emphasised in the literature about research methods and this was also important here. Although I was not engaging with parents or children my working presence in the school was announced in the school newsletter and my current CRB clearance was a helpful reassurance to

governors. Not only were there ongoing re-negotiations with the headteacher in terms of attendance at INSET meetings and other school meetings, but each individual interview also required clarification about the study and the future use of any information. When a new curriculum leader joined the senior team after Easter the project had to be explained again, and had moved on from the initial aims to a more specific focus on dialogue within the SMT meetings.

There tends to be less emphasis in the methodological literature on the 'end game', the withdrawal from the field and future relationship with the organization. As a researcher in my local area it was tempting to keep visiting for 'updating' and to see what happened next, particularly as many accounts of learning are necessarily reflective and retrospective. There was an additional issue that I was likely to meet at least some of the participants again after the research had finished. With this in mind I decided to draw clear and firm boundaries around the fieldwork, with a clear end date (the end of the summer term). Withdrawing from the field in this way was not quite straightforward from the point of analysis. Completing 'round up' conversations at the end of the summer term fitted in with the rhythm of the school year and the chronotope of school time, yet from a research perspective this 'fixed' the data. The balance of recorded and researcher noted/observed data was established and, whilst I would have liked to go back and record more SMT meetings to add to the genre analysis, in view of the boundaries that I had established it was not possible to do this.

### **3.2 Levels of researcher engagement – from eyewitness to outsider**

Adopting an intermittent ethnographic approach for the study resolved some of the issues about the timing of observations and interactions across the school year, but the issue of sampling within the case with respect to people was also important.

Bryman (2004) has criticised leadership research for an emphasis on those in formal leadership roles as opposed to informal leaders within organizations. Discussions about distributed leadership (Gronn 2002; Spillane and Orlina 2005) in schools had also raised my awareness of this issue of informal leaders, nevertheless, the formal leadership group at Peony Hill included three leaders who would be new to the curriculum leader role this year, two of whom were also very recently qualified teachers. It seemed an ideal opportunity to explore how *learning* took place within the workplace for these new leaders and to explore how the group themselves developed as the year progressed. Taking an ethnographic approach (and a relational approach to leadership as described in chapter 1) allowed me to be sensitive to comments indicating other informal leaders within the school and the way that leader and follower roles changed for individuals in different social situations. This study, therefore, did focus on the Senior Management Team (SMT); the headteacher, the deputy head and the three curriculum leaders (CLs) in relation to their ongoing learning, although as I indicate in chapter 6 it was clear that there were other informal leaders within the staff group.

The methods chosen for the research were those that I thought would illuminate the boundaries, voice and understanding of learning used by both individuals and the leadership group. On one level the methods used can be presented as a straightforward, if eclectic list: interviews, concept mapping, observations, fieldnotes, recordings of the group of leaders talking about their learning. Of course this skates over the surface of the particular *techniques* that I used in engaging as a researcher with this variety of research tools and the way that the dialogue between myself and the teachers in the school was initiated and maintained. The way that I can best describe this is, as I indicate above, separated out into two arenas of engagement, *participant led encounters* and *researcher led encounters*. This implies that there were clear boundaries between each category of involvement, and on some occasions this was the case, but for others the boundaries were less clear and one

type of engagement segued into another. Each one of these modes of engagement held an assortment of practice decisions that needed to be made and I outline my main data collection methods in the next section.

### **3.2.1 Participant led encounters – school life and events**

Observation techniques, participant observation and ethnography more generally are discussed thoroughly in a range of general and specific research methods textbooks (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Emerson et al. 1995; Pole and Morrison 2003; Silverman 2001, 2005). For me, techniques were shaped by the issues of responsiveness in the field and reflexivity to the situation that I found myself in. The pre-planned timetable for INSET sessions for the whole staff and the meeting timetables for the senior team and the year teams were an integral part of the school as an organization and my research presence was shaped by these organizational features. During the first term I negotiated access to as many 'adult' events as possible, each week attending the whole school INSET programme and the senior management team meetings. I attended each of the weekly year group meetings in turn for the first term. I was also invited to, and attended, a governor training session and reviewed the governor documents for the previous and current year. Although on the very first two INSET days I was one of a very mixed crowd in terms of newcomers and established staff, as the year groups formed and developed their own team identities I became more of a welcome, but clearly outside observer to the sessions. My presence at the SMT meetings was welcomed and comments were occasionally sought from me about the school, my role as an observer being noted and drawn on in the discussions. As the year progressed the school changed its meeting strategy, in response to the headteacher's views on meetings and some of the feedback from the group discussion about the research held towards the end of term one. INSET for the whole school returned to the more usual format of occasional twilight sessions and year team meetings were disbanded. I was able



to continue to attend the INSET sessions and followed up my attendance at the SMT meetings, which by this time had become my major focus of attention, during the spring and summer terms.

Making fieldnotes is not difficult in a school, particularly in training sessions where many people are writing things down, but there was an issue of sensitivity to the situation. In some INSET sessions it was clear that people were not expected to make notes, just listen, and my notes here were minimal and expanded in the evening after the event. I tried to pay particular attention to both my own interpretations of events and the comments and contributions of the participants in the research. Conteh (2005) expressed my feelings well here when she describes it as '*tautological to speak of participant research*' and goes on to suggest that the important aspect is '*that the researcher recognises the ways in which she herself is present in the context, just as much a participant as everyone else, though obviously in different ways.*' (Conteh et al. 2005:103). The fieldnotes varied from almost verbatim process notes of who was speaking in the SMT and year group meetings to brief notes made during and after events. Reviewing and adding to these fieldnotes, helped me to monitor my own concerns about researcher relationships and acted as a continuous counterpoint to the collection of elicited data through the mapping and interviews. Reflection on my own and other people's social actions generated a degree of anxiety, particularly around some ethical decisions about confidentiality that I made in relation to discussions with the headteacher who occasionally pressed me for information which I was not prepared to give. I felt that she might end my access to the school at a number of points, but she maintained our agreement and in a final interview at the end of the year seemed positive about my involvement with the school.

### **3.2.2 Researcher led encounters – interviews and concept mapping**

Adult learning was not the main focus of the school and, whilst aspects of learning were sometimes mentioned in passing, I was conscious that as a researcher I would have to raise this issue explicitly in order to gather participant perspectives. As I mention earlier, naming learning (Boud and Solomon 2003) has significance, and the participants of the research were keen to help to explain the numerous ways in which they learnt. It seemed that almost everything could be interpreted as learning from one perspective or another. To gain some purchase on this, five individual formal concept mapping interviews were audio-recorded with the SMT members during the autumn term. These interviews were researcher led and loosely structured in a way that I hoped would enable the participants to think about their own learning in specific workplace situations rather than alluding to general terms such as 'from experience' or 'by doing'. I had explored this method of using interviews and concept mapping together in my Msc Thesis and subsequent article (Pegg 2007). In brief, the interviews followed a loose structure being divided into two halves. In the first half I used Spradley's (1979) grand tour questions to elicit a brief career history, future career intentions and to ease the participant into describing their role and responsibilities (Appendix B). Whilst this career and role history was important for examining movements across the boundaries of the school I could also use this immediate interview history for the participant to draw on in completing two concept maps.

Concept mapping has been used in education and management as a tool to develop conceptual models and to explore stakeholder perspectives (Kinchin and Hay 2000; Trochim and Cabrera 2005; and specifically with headteachers by McLay and Brown 2003). The process begins with the development of a focus statement or prime descriptor. In my study the participants created two maps with the prime descriptors being firstly 'I lead when I.....' and then 'I learn to lead by.....'. The interviewee then generates a visual representation of the way that they link ideas and concepts

that finish these statements. Teachers tend to be familiar with this approach as concept maps have also been used as a teaching tool (Kinchin and Hay 2000). In my past and current research the participants were encouraged to talk as they developed the maps (although I also developed a strategy of being patient through the silences), and I asked follow up questions for clarification and to get the participants to explain their links and mapping. The recording of this process helped me to group the generated concepts during the analysis and, by getting the participants to talk through and make explicit their reasons for connecting concepts, I hoped to encourage reflection and to make explicit tacit knowledge. The maps were returned to the participants for checking and in order for them to make any additional comments or links as they may have had further ideas. In this way the maps acted as a tool for reflection and learning in themselves, a pedagogic tool. Recognising this was important for me as this foregrounded the notion that learning continued to take place throughout my involvement in the settings, and in response to my presence in the settings. (Example maps can be seen in chapter 6. Concept map 2 is in original form, map 3 computer presented and uncoded and map 8 has participant concepts and linkages and has been coded)

For this research I extended my original use of concept mapping as a data collection tool. After assembling and initially coding a composite map for each of the prime descriptors, (including all the comments by the individual members, names and identifiers being removed) I then returned to the leadership group and recorded a discussion about leadership and learning with them using the coded composite maps as stimulus material. This iterative process (with the addition of some element of respondent commentary on the research) developed the discussion and allowed further ideas about leadership and learning to be made explicit. (The composite Learning to Lead map can be seen in Appendix C, research coding green)

### 3.2.3 Encounters in-between

A key feature of the ethnographic method is time spent just 'being there'. Whilst at no point in the study did I aspire to being a 'complete participant', and people were always aware that I was a researcher, the informal spaces of the staffroom, the corridors and the times prior to and after INSET sessions and meetings were spaces for casual conversations and tuning into the mood of the moment. In these spaces I never began with questions about the research, but began with more general social comments and, as I got to know the people, entered into conversations about general school events and other issues. These were not always directly relevant to the research; during one lunchtime I joined the school during a conversation about pets and this topic was tossed around the staffroom for a good twenty minutes.

Some people were more friendly and interested in the research than others. In addition to the headteacher the key informants included two of the management team (the two newest and youngest leaders) and the IT technician who was also the main informal leader within the school. These people would actively offer information that they perceived to be relevant to my research about themselves and events in the school. Such conversations worked in a zone that was more than 'social' and yet less than the researcher directed formal interviews. They took place in the public domain and comments on leadership, the participant's own or that of other people, were not directly made here, but comments filling me in about events at the school were very important in view of the intermittent ethnography and my sensitivity to issues about leadership within the school.

Looking at documents (Governor Minutes and CPD records) and taking photographs of the school boundaries and the staffroom noticeboards were perhaps activities that could be described as researcher led, but the content could be described as '*naturalistic evidence*' (Silverman 2001). The data was generated by the participants of the study without the stimulus of research questions, part of the daily life of the

school. The haziness of developing such categorizations about research data becomes apparent here as even when evidence is 'found' it is selected as worth finding by the researcher. For example the photographs were not taken with the intention of completing a semiotic analysis (Scollon and Scollon 2003) but were taken because I felt that they shed light on the social action within the school. As I realized the significance of time and physical restraints for verbal communication the notes left on 'whiteboards' in the staffroom seemed more important, and these were captured by photographs.

### **3.3 The analyst – immersion in the pool of data**

Analysis is a complex process during which the relationship between ideas and data is configured and reconfigured through the efforts of the researcher. Interpretations begin even before commencing activity in the field; taking an intermittent ethnographic approach had already 'reduced' the data by focussing on selected events and people. In this case I was also already using the sensitizing concept of boundaries and boundary crossing to explore learning in the setting and I was interested in describing leadership and learning from the participant's point of view, using the interviews and concept maps to elicit their ideas. The very tentative initial analysis in the early stages of the research took place at the same time as I was in the field and there was some degree of time constraint as I needed to return the composite concept maps to the group for discussion before the end of the first school term. As the research went on my data collection was increasingly focussed and there were longer gaps between my visits to the school allowing time for a greater degree of reflection. During the research the study became progressively focussed, moving from a *descriptive* account of boundaries and boundary crossing for people in relation to the organization to an *exploration* of the genres of communication used within the organization. Whilst grounded theory (Charmaz 2000; Glaser and Strauss 1967) was never my intent, Hammersley and Atkinson

point out that '*Progressive focusing may also involve a gradual shift from a concern with describing social events and processes towards developing and testing explanations or theories.*' (2007:160) and I hope to have extended ideas about learning in the workplace through building on theory here. The analytic strategy used three main approaches which I outline below.

### **3.3.1 Career stories as movement across boundaries**

The interviews provided an account of the past working careers of the key participants and these career stories were expanded by some participants into more extensive biographical accounts, reflecting back on educational attainments and factors which were influential in the choice of teaching as a career. These accounts can be seen in the light of Billett's '*ontogeny*', as the individual's ongoing life history and engagement in learning (Billett 2004), however caution needs to be exercised here. Gergen (2001) and others have illustrated that stories are structured narrative accounts that are culturally and historically situated. Events are selected and ordered towards a valued endpoint and causal linkages are made that make sense of events and develop integrity of identity and, in this case, a teacher's current place on a recognised career pathway. Stories of career progression for teachers have readily available frameworks and structures which are influenced by somewhat linear routes through professional progression towards headship – the valued endpoint. (Biesta and Tedder 2006 and the TLRP Learning Lives project for a discussion of biographical approaches; Kelchtermans 1993; NCSL 2004; Ribbins 2003; Woods, P 1985).

Rather than undertaking a narrative analysis or a learning biography my purpose in gathering such accounts was to look at the way in which the participants described their movement in and out of organizations and roles, their boundary crossing, in terms of expanding their learning experiences. Whilst examining movements in and out of organizations offered one way of tracking a history of experience for the

participants it became apparent during conversations and subsequent analysis that the way that this journey was evaluated was equally important in terms of the learning undertaken. I discuss this aspect of the career stories in more detail in chapter 5 and, again, the theme of time is useful here. Bakhtin, in '*Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel*' (1981b) argues that chronotopes give meaning to the narratives used and structure the representations that we connect together. Using the metaphors of '*adventure time*' and '*the road*' drawn from this chapter helped me to conceptualize the way that time was narrated into these accounts, and to consider the significance of this. For example, the language used was of a particular trajectory for the career path to headship and seniority in the teaching profession and drew on the centripetal and normalising time frames offered by the NCSL for the achievement of this end. Moving differently along this 'road' to headship needed to be accounted for and warranted investigation about the way that both headship and learning for career progression were understood.

This aspect of the interviews and conversations was complemented by the mapping of leadership activities as during mapping participants also indicated their current boundary crossing activities (e.g. membership of the Deputy Headteachers' network). Exploring the significance of these activities in terms of the time allowed to move out of the school environment and the way that these types of activities contributed to ongoing school life were important and evaluative aspects of the conversations.

### **3.3.2 Developing themes about leading and learning - describing boundaries**

The initial analysis discussed with the school was primarily a descriptive and thematic one as I 'clustered' concepts around the themes that emerged relating to leadership and learning for the two respective composite maps. All the individual concepts were entered onto one large map and then grouped into similar (or even

identical) words, the content checked via the recordings for clarification of the meaning. The linkages between concepts made by each participant were retained. These composite maps were then discussed in the group session with the five key participants and helped to surface their ideas about leadership and learning in the school, and this in itself added to the data for the study.

The issues that seemed to be emerging as during this first term were the way in which learners described a wide variety of learning methods in the maps and interviews, but my observations and involvement in the school's timetabled sessions gave me the sense that the range of opportunities for these learning actions was limited. The reason given for this contrast by the participants during the discussion and during their interviews was that of 'time' and the limited possibilities for the SMT to meet together to talk and to reflect on either their learning or their leadership. The two themes of communication and time seemed worth pursuing as they were features of the school and also used as a both an explanation and a justification for the way in which communication was taking place in the school that did not seem to include reflection or discussion about leadership *per se*.

Alongside the thematic development I was also generating a descriptive account of the way that boundaries were created and worked within the school. This descriptive account was gained through observations, conversations, looking at school timetables and documents and my own reflective fieldnotes about how boundaries seemed to work for both myself as a researcher and the people within and outside the school. I was initially looking at organizational, group and individual boundaries here and I used Hernes framework (2003, 2004, Table 1, section 2.21) for investigating organizational boundaries as a starting point for this analysis. I then went on to use these descriptions and participant comments to assess the workplace learning environment using the expansive-restrictive continuum (Fuller



and Unwin 2004) and its subsequent application to teachers' learning environments (Evans et al. 2006:53) to assess the workplace learning environment of the school.

Having made a preliminary analysis that the school had features characteristic of the restrictive end of the continuum I decided to focus on how learning took place within this type of environment, as the feedback from the individual participants was that they were learning rapidly. I took up the themes of communication and discussion during meetings and during the second and third terms in the school I focussed my attention on the opportunities for the SMT to meet together in meetings and at INSET sessions. This progressive focussing led me to turn to genre analysis as an aid to investigation.

### **3.3.3 Developing a genre analysis of communication in meetings**

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out that ethnography has long examined talk for its positioning, justification, rationale of events etc rather than regarding it as an unproblematic source of information. Ethnographic methods have also been combined with a range of discourse analytic methods and the specific methods used are, at the discretion of the researcher, chosen to illuminate the data and research problem concerned. There are two key issues here, firstly the nature of the data itself and its physical form and secondly the specific analytic method that I draw upon to generate the analysis.

#### **Talk, fieldnotes and transcriptions – organizing the data**

Taylor (2001) points out that collected material becomes data through a process of selection which takes into account the research focus and decisions about which features of the materials will be relevant to the analysis. I used the Bakhtinian analysis to investigate occasions when teachers were able to talk in groups together – specifically the INSET sessions and the SMT meetings. For the majority of these events it was not possible to record the meeting, but I did record the group feedback session, and the SMT recorded one of their meetings themselves at my request (I

was not present). For all other meetings I took detailed process notes, indicating who was speaking and, as far as possible, their actual words and specifically whether framed as a question, response or follow up to other comments. In the ordered environment of the SMT meeting this was manageable for much of the time, but the INSET notes included more general comments such as 'group response' or 'general talking around the room'. Fieldnotes did not include notes of pauses with the exception of comments such as 'no response' or 'silence' after a question had been posed by a group member.

The tape recorded meetings were transcribed using basic conventions (Rock 2005) which attended to turn taking, longer pauses and interruptions. In terms of turn taking and contributions by the various participants I was satisfied that there was some degree of consistency in my records between the tape recorded and the most fully recorded fieldnote sessions (SMT meetings) that would allow me to use both to examine genres of talk. I then looked across the topics and styles of the INSET meetings (8) as one data set and the SMT meetings (7) as a second data set for this genre analysis of naturally occurring talk.

### **Genre analysis – features and typologies**

Genre theory has roots in literature and discourse (rhetorical analysis) and Bakhtin refers to both texts and speech genres and suggested that the classification of genres was a project that needed further work. For Bakhtin, genres have '*relatively stable thematic, compositional, and stylistic types of utterances*' (1986:64) and are classified into primary and secondary types. Miller (1984) clearly illustrates the tensions in discussing 'genres' when genre is used both as a term of classification (of types of discourse – agendas, letters, novels, films etc) and as an aspect of discourse that connects to social action. She argues that genre can be viewed as constitutive of social action as it represents '*typified rhetorical action*' in recurrent situations (1984:151) and that as social action a genre '*acquires meaning from*

*situation and from the social context in which that situation arose'* (ibid:163). She goes on to argue that genres have rules, substance and form but that '*genres change, evolve, and decay: the number of genres current in any society is indeterminate and depends upon the complexity and diversity of the society.*' (ibid:163). Additionally, Kain (2005, Chapter 2, section 2.31) suggests that the functions of these genres can be instrumental, metacommunicative and social/political.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.24 Orlikowski and Yates (1994) propose that a repertoire of genres as communicative practices can be identified within a particular organization and they argue that genres emerge from the historic nature of established practices and have recognisable *substance* (a social purpose, theme or topic) and *form* (structural features, communication medium and language eg. specialized professional vocabulary). The 'rules' of a genre are located in the links and associations between situations, form and substance in a particular organization. They also identify how genres act in relation to one another, by overlap (where a '*communicative action may involve the enactment of more than one separate genre*' (Orlikowski and Yates 1994:544) and the system of relationships between genres where an action within one genre is responded to appropriately by other genres. (Orlikowski and Yates use the idea of opening and closing statements in a court as individual genres within a system). Through time and use, organizations therefore develop a localised and specific '*genre repertoire*' which becomes institutionalized and operates as an organizing structure for a community. However, this structure is always open to change as genres are enacted by individuals who, at the level of the utterance, negotiate and improvise specific communicative encounters in ways which allow for movement and change in the genres in use.

Genres then, can be identified through purpose, form and situation within an organization. Whilst Yates and Orlikowski (1992) attend to the way genres may change over time through innovation and the introduction of new communicative practices, they later acknowledge that genres, in themselves, embody temporal expectations (2002). Taking a Bakhtinian approach gives more attention to this aspect of genre and includes this as an integral feature of a genre. My approach also emphasizes the way in which the boundaries between primary and secondary genres are established and negotiated. The features that I used in my initial identification of genre were the purpose and situation. The 'purpose' was the whole school training for INSET and the 'situation' that of being directed by the school timetable and the authority of the headteacher to attend. The 'purpose' of the meeting genre was slightly less well defined but related to the management of the school and was clearly situated through place, time and invited membership.

In summary, the typologies for genres are located around two possible groups categorized as types (text, novel, report, meeting) or function (instrumental, metacommunicative and social/political; Kain 2005). In my analysis I chose to look at two types of social action, meetings and INSET sessions, and found the framework of function a useful starting point to explore how these genres were consequential for learning. I began to explore the various genres which had relationships to one another within these events as indicating a repertoire of genres which was institutionalized and specific to place, time and situation within the organization. The features of genres themselves are located through *theme/purpose, composition/form* and *situation*, (to amalgamate Bakhtin and Yates and Orlikowski 's features) and with the additional features of *style* and *chronotope (expectations of time)* that are also specific to individual genres. While much of the work within genre theory has focussed on written work, it is clear that genres, spoken, written and as social action shape the production of discourse at the level of

a community. These social languages therefore construct particular forms of knowledge within genres as they '*let us know whether it is ours to ask or answer, to argue or clarify, to declare or request.*' (Bazerman 1994) and it was with spoken genres that I was primarily working in this part of my analysis.

### **3.3.4 Developing the ethnographic analysis**

Whilst the analysis had clearly moved along a pathway of 'progressive focussing' the relationships between boundaries, spaces, genres and learning to be a leader were all entwined and far from static. Having considered some of the detailed interactions in the school I stepped back and revisited these framing concepts in terms of their juxtaposition with one another and with my own ideas as a researcher. I felt it was important to find a way of connecting the various strands that did not disconnect the maps and photographs (which were 'freeze frame' forms of data) from the audio tapes, observations and reflexive journals recording conversations that took place over longer periods of time. The year long timeframe and changing nature of the study was important, and 'categorising' the data thematically seemed to lose this sense of time moving on and the evolving ideas and social actions that were constantly renegotiated throughout my time, and outside my time, in the setting. The difficulty seemed to lie with the division between the very nuanced understanding of time and context of the ethnographic data and the production of bounded categories for 'evidence' of themes and genres required for the research. One useful metaphor that helped to connect genres over time was the 'dolphin' metaphor used by Mercer (2000) to think about how social knowledge surfaces in dialogue or text at different but connected points. Looking at the way in which topics 'surfaced' within the meetings over time helped me to think through the idea of 'unfinished' business as explicit areas of common knowledge that were in the *process* of being constructed through negotiation, talk and the actions of the individuals both during and outside the meetings.

Thinking about the whole study as emerging from a dialogic approach helped to develop a coherent and consistent approach across the various types of data and the analysis. My dialogic relationships also included the immersion in the literature and my continuing conceptual development, which began the study, and continued throughout and after the study. Considering encounters as dialogic also applied to researcher/participant relationships throughout the project and the relationship between myself and a variety of audiences, the recipients of the different research reports. The listeners and readers of the report are all subject to this perspective and a dialogic relationship includes the anticipation of, and reaction to, the responses and comments of others to the presented findings of the research during its development. Trying to maintain this holistic approach involved me in taking a step back from the detail of the organization and I began to think about relationships between genres, spaces and boundaries and the implications these relationships might have for an individual developing her/his own evaluative note in the process of becoming a leader.

Ultimately analysis relies on imaginative ideas that are drawn from and build on current thinking. Schostak (2002) suggests that imagination is key to research in terms of methodology, subjectivity and generalization. The research itself can be conceptualized as a project of the imagination, built from the selection of a particular focus, grounded in the description of events and processes and attending to symbols and assumptions about 'outsider' and 'other' for the researcher and the participants. Schostak (2002:17) goes on to suggest that these projects of the imagination take '*life from motives, desires, purposes*' of the researcher and the participants, rather than tracing mechanical causes and effects. To connect all these features I turned to the field of 'composition studies', some of which draws upon Bakhtin to develop the creative writing of students. This offered a different perspective on writing about analysis, moving to one which suggested that writing is part of analysis (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). Here I found an approach that could

incorporate both myself as a writer and researcher, that encompassed talk and texts, and allowed the integration of ideas about time and power. What a Bakhtinian approach offered, along with Shostak, was a way of integrating the whole ethnography as a themed approach from my involvement as a researcher, through the interaction with the literature, the interaction with the participants and the analytical frame. Not stopping there, Bakhtin also offered me a way to conceptualize my writing up and relationship with the reader. It is this last aspect that I will discuss further in the next section.

### **3.4 The commentator - presenting the writing and visual images**

Writing as representation is a well developed theme in the ethnographic literature, and it is intimately connected with the researcher throughout the ethnography through notes, fieldnotes, journals, communications and lastly, the final text. Coffey and Atkinson remind us that '*analysis implies representation*' (1996:108) and go on to discuss the variety of possible texts and representations in their chapter 'Writing and Representation' (1996:108- 137). They commend '*an awareness of variety, coupled with principled decisions. How we choose to represent our data is no longer (if it has ever been ) obvious and unproblematic*' (ibid:137). Emerson et al. (1995) identify how the emphasis on writing and representation of the final report has tended to obscure the importance of the writing process throughout the project. Writing that took place within the project is drawn on here to reflect back on the choices that I made in taking my particular path of data collection and analysis and the reasons for these decisions. I also connected to the term coined by Jameson of the 'prison-house of language' (cited in Kent 1998:34) and this expresses my frustrations in trying to capture the whole ethnography in the formal style of the PhD report, with 'transparency' over category development and clear boundaries and static relationships between categories. To some extent the way that I have presented the thesis represents an attempt to escape these strictures by the

construction of a clear boundary between the 'research process' as described by my own voice as a researcher and the 'context' described by a combination of my own voice, the voices of others, texts, maps and photographs.

Taking a Bakhtinian approach means that the final text should illustrate the heteroglossia, the conflicting and multiple ways in which the 'subject' is represented. I was also influenced by Spradley and McCurdy's (1972) beautifully illustrated book on ethnography. This book, with its simple sketched illustrations was a joy to read; as the reader already sympathetic to its content I wanted to retain this sense of the visual in my own ethnographic writing, and enable the reader to connect with the work through their own interpretations with some aspects of the ethnographic experience. In this sense the visual representation of text, dialogue, maps and pictures is a poor substitute for the actual voices of the participants, but is the way in which I engage with the data, and attempt to bring that experience to the reader.

### **3.4.1 Pictures, concept maps and documents**

In section 2 my pictures act as both data, sources for my analysis that are discussed in the text, and representations to stimulate the reader. I hope that these pictures, with brief captions, both relate to the subject of the text and help the reader to develop their dialogic engagement with the ethnography.

Concept maps were drawn by the participants and I have retained one map in its original form (Concept Map 2). The words used by the participants were entered unchanged except in respect of names and identifying features, such as a named year group. The maps were analysed using Decision Explorer™ software (a mapping programme) to colour code and arrange the data. The links made by participants between concepts were retained as much as possible. Making this distinction between data that comes from the participants and the adding of my own



colours to identify the themes used to analyse the data should assist the reader in following the development of my ideas.

School documents are reproduced within a 'frame' and extracts from documents are also framed where they form a basis for discussion or placed as a quotation where they are briefly referred to.

### 3.4.2 Fieldnotes, dialogue and audio recorded talk

It seemed important to find a way of conveying which extracts were drawn from different sources of data. Whilst I have identified this within the thesis I have also tried to identify data by using different types of text. Fieldnotes are identified by 'block' text with quotations for reported speech sections -

**After Happy New Year greetings I asked Beth if all was well and what was happening re INSET days. She indicated that 'things are rather different this term, and more complicated'**

(Telephone call to Beth 12.01.07)

Dialogue that was recorded by me by hand is indicated by italic indented text :

Example Fieldnotes of dialogue -

<i>Sharon</i>	<i>describes games and suggests activities</i>
<i>Jayne</i>	<i>how long on each activity?</i>
<i>Sharon</i>	<i>goes through - warm up, 10 - 15 mins , etc</i>
<i>Sharon</i>	<i>look at the plan</i>
<i>Faye</i>	<i>[looks at the plan]</i>
<i>Sharon</i>	<i>you'll see the difference in recovery times and pace</i>
<i>Jayne</i>	<i>it shows tennis lesson 4</i>
<i>Sharon</i>	<i>where are you with work on this?</i>
<i>Jayne</i>	<i>on backhand</i>
<i>Kerry</i>	<i>on forehand</i>

(Year 4 meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> Fieldnotes October 2007)

Audio recorded talk was transcribed using basic conventions-  
(.) small pause  
(( )) word unclear  
[ ] section omitted or researcher notes inserted.

### 3.4.3 Writing - my own and other people's: a question of voice

The question of voice is the hardest one to address. Holquist says that '*The obsessive question at the heart of Bakhtin's thought is always "Who is talking"*' (cited in Farmer 1998:15). Ethnography is sensitive to representing the voices of the participants involved in the study, but when I read Kay Halasek's work on '*The Politics of Reported Speech and the Ideology of Form*' (1999:145 – 171) the idea of the '*authoritative discourse*' and the '*internally persuasive discourse*' in relation to Bakhtin's ideas about centripetal and centrifugal pressures the issue became much more complex. Representing the voices of the participants in this study I needed to acknowledge that some of the voices already had more status and authority than others. This applied to both voices from the literature (not least Bakhtin) and the participants of the study – the voice of the Headteacher. As a postgraduate student, my voice was potentially lost amongst the quotations and references in the study. Calling on authoritative quotations to support my position could inhibit my own voice and Halasek suggests that one way for writers to deal with this is by adding commentary to the work, and this is one reason for writing in the first person and making an attempt to reflexively acknowledge the 'off stage' voices that influence, steer and constrain the study. My style of writing aims to include the heteroglossia of voices and speech, allowing for challenge, inconsistency, imagination and new developments.

James Clifford (2007) writing '*On Ethnographic Authority*' traces the way that assumptions about the authoritative position in ethnographic writing have shaped writing styles, and argues that the processes at work are at once '*experiential, interpretive, dialogical and polyphonic*' (2007:492) and that the ethnographer has

strategic choices in imposing order on these voices. The choices of style in this case are limited by the expectations and traditions of PhD theses, concerns about clarity of method, the transparency of analytic process and the development of the coherent argument demonstrating the achievement of originality. Concerns about representing voices also have ethical implications and this impacts on the way that voices are represented in my study.

Using the ethical guidelines for BERA and having gained approval from the Open University Research with Human Participants committee, the organizational and ethical guidance requires that the names of participants in the research be changed and the setting anonymous. This created several issues for both the participants and myself in conducting, analysing and writing up the research. Whilst the participants at the school did not question the issue of anonymity, thinking about changing names for the analysis brought me into close contact with my own conception of reality. The moment I tried to change the names of the participants it seemed that a layer was imposed between the voice of the participants and the way that they could be represented. I felt very uncomfortable imposing new names on the participants, and considered carefully which ones to use. This I initially saw as a transposition, just a technical move from one name to another, but when I began to develop my own interpretation and analysis of the work, further layers were added that distanced the voices of the participants. By the time that these voices were heard/seen in my finished work the accumulated transpositions and interpretative moves seemed more like fiction, the characters and voices adopting a life of their own. I could see for the first time why some ethnographers represented their work as dialogue, fiction or poetry, making no attempt to represent reality.

However, both ethically and morally the views of other people are represented here, and I have tried to give them space to be heard by using substantial quotations, and by focussing on my relationship and role in the interactions that took place. The

voices of the participants are a key part of the research as they are part of the dialogic interaction that took place. Whilst I considered how representative the extracts selected from my engagement with the people concerned were, and comment on this in my presentation of the data, this was not the only issue. It was not simply the number of times a comment was made, although that was important, but also how passionately and forcefully the participants made their points. Whilst the work inevitably presents my own viewpoint, people did participate because they wanted to say things to me, and I have done my best to represent their views.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Looking back over my methodological chapter the main points that I want to make are about how this specific ethnography grew out of both my own approach to people and the topic that I am investigating. The amorphous nature of the subjects of the research, learning and leadership, led me to define my own boundaries around the ethnography. Yet drawing boundaries has to be done with care and they are not solely my own creation. Some of the boundaries were drawn by the participants of the study, and some by 'off stage' forces shaping the nature of PhD work, the role of the mature student and modes of acceptable academic writing.

## Part Two

### Peony Hill School



As I drive to Peony Hill School the sun illuminates the warm stones of the well preserved market town buildings. The more modern and recent expansion is hidden between the old buildings that line the road and market square. I drive past the market place delicatessen and turn off before the old buildings end; the school sits few hundred metres from the main road, surrounded by houses built around the 1950's and 1960's. The school area is marked on the road with school signs for traffic, no parking signs and zigzag markings around the school

gates. I turn in sharply to the car park and find the only space left, just behind the older P.E. block. The school itself is a mix of buildings of various ages linked together by steps and doors. The oldest building is hidden behind the smart entrance and extension that has the corporate one floor look of many primary schools in the area. The entrance is new, with a keypad and speakerphone entry system that controls and restricts access to those with the codes.

The inside of the school is clean, uncluttered and light. It seems spacious; the headteacher and deputy head both have rooms with seating for several other people. The receptionist takes me to the staffroom where Beth, the headteacher, is making a coffee. I am greeted by her and immediately offered a piece of chocolate cake as it is someone's birthday. The staffroom is filled with teachers, most of whom are young, talking quietly. There are a couple of male teachers here, alongside the many women teachers. The walls are neatly organized into pin boards, whiteboards and staff pigeonholes alongside an organized shelf of folders. The kitchen is tidy and a water cooler, dishwasher and coffeemaker are evident. Corporate chairs line the room and there are just one or two magazines lying on the coffee tables. I wonder if the very tidy environment is because it is the beginning of the term and there are many new staff that haven't yet made their mark, literally and metaphorically. Staff gradually leave the room to go to lessons just before the end of lunch bell rings. I am left in the room with two women who introduce themselves as TAs and begin to photocopy and organize handouts. On this first visit it is not yet obvious who the leaders in the school are, apart from Beth herself who is about to meet with me in her office after dealing with a pupil.

*(Fieldnotes September 06)*

In this section of my thesis I develop a picture of Peony Hill School from a particular perspective: what it was like as a workplace where teachers could learn to lead. This shifts the focus of the thesis from workplace learning in general to the specific arena of primary school leadership. As I commented at the end of chapter two my own position as a researcher and the position of those teaching and leading in the school are very different in relation to the heteroglossic world. Different discourses about leadership and learning are of significance to each of us and different aspects are brought into play in each arena. In this part of the thesis I explore the way that the interactions between the heteroglossia, the secondary genres, the primary speech genres and organizational boundaries shape the way that the five formal leaders

experience learning to lead in this 350 pupil primary school. I focus on the way that the characteristics of boundaries shape the ways that individual leaders are able to access secondary genres within the heteroglossia, and the way that boundaries around genres and organizational boundaries coincide to shape particular experiences of learning to lead.

To give the reader a sense of the heteroglossia, the range of discourses that participants *might* draw upon, I explore some of the secondary genres, the '*internal stratifications*' (Bakhtin 1991:263) of the heteroglossia in relation to educational leadership in chapter 4. The choices of topic here are necessarily selective in terms of the full heteroglossic array, but were made after considering the way in which the participants of the study alluded to wider debates in their concept mapping, conversations and interviews. This discussion of the secondary genres is more than a scene setting exercise, secondary genres are essential to the analysis of the utterance – the basic unit of communication and contribute to an individual's personal positioning through the evaluative accent evident in the words used in everyday talk.

In chapters five, six and seven the voices of the participants can be heard entwined with my own as I discuss the various ways in which learning to lead takes place for the participants of the study within the school. Through these three chapters I draw on the ethnographic material to explore the way that boundaries, spaces and genres are consequential for the way that this learning takes place and whilst all areas are interrelated, I discuss boundaries, spaces and dialogue in turn.

## Chapter 4

### Secondary genres – engaging with the heteroglossia

*'Learning is the key to prosperity - for each of us as individuals, as well as for the nation as a whole. Investment in human capital will be the foundation of success in the knowledge-based global economy of the twenty-first century. This is why the Government has put learning at the heart of its ambition. Our first policy paper addressed school standards. This Green Paper sets out for consultation how learning throughout life will build human capital by encouraging the acquisition of knowledge and skills and emphasising creativity and imagination. The fostering of an enquiring mind and the love of learning are essential to our future success.'*

(David Blunkett, Introduction to the Green Paper, The Learning Age 1998.)

*"A modern school requires modern leaders. Many schools will go through major rebuilding work in the next decade or so. They will become extended schools open to the community far beyond the school day and throughout the holidays. This requires new ways of working and a new approach to leading a school. The report highlights a number of areas where improvements can be made and positive action can be built on."*

Jim Knight (18.02.2007) Introducing the 'Independent Study into School Leadership' 2007 by Price Waterhouse Coopers.

These two quotations illustrate one possible secondary genre, the genre of political commentary about learning and school leadership in England. Within the heteroglossia many other genres and social languages are recognisable such as those of educational research, policy genres, the social languages of professional associations and unions representing their members interests and various genres of representation (film, novels) that encapsulate schooling and what it means to be a headteacher within the arena of cultural life. Whilst it is impossible to describe each and every possible genre connected with school leadership that participants might have come into contact with over the course of their lives, some genres are more



authoritative and influential than others. The powerful genres of government policy and NCSL leadership programmes seem likely to be visible within a school, however there are differential authoritative voices in play at any one time. The way in which the workplace shapes and channels access to these genres is discussed in chapter 5, but here I review the '*major genres of commentary*' (Bakhtin 1986:62) that a researcher might expect the participants of the study to have come into contact with whilst learning to be a primary school leader.

I begin with the genres of political and professional commentary, and certainly two of the participants of the study specifically mentioned learning from '*debates on radio 4*' and '*books and journals*' (Appendix C, Concept map 'learning to lead'). However, the way in which genres are experienced is likely to be hybrid. As Maybin (2006) points out we are able to deal with multiple genres within social action and make multiple switches between genres in any one interaction. These debates and journals are therefore also likely to include the social languages of '*professional commentary*', the representatives of the National Association of Headteachers, union representatives and headteachers speaking for the profession. In this chapter the powerful genre of political commentary is both illustrated and acts to contextualize the debate about school leadership, to illustrate the way in which the goals of learning - what it means to be a school leader, are contested within the different genres and across the heteroglossia of discourses about school leadership and learning to be a leader.

I move on to consider the influence of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) as the vehicle for implementing government policy. This centralized and authoritative policy genre dominates and directs career progression for teachers moving to leadership in schools. Related to this are specific and associated genres of learning, the pedagogic approaches that are drawn on as part of the discourse of leadership development. Outside this framework, and of an infinite variety, are a

range of social languages associated with a variety of media that offer representations of school leaders (Film, TV documentary, TV drama, Books, Internet sites, Radio) and these bring to attention still more ideas about leaders and leadership from other areas of society. Presenting this heteroglossia as a clearly defined range of genres implies firm boundaries between them, and it is important to remember here that the heteroglossia is a shifting, tension ridden and contradictory arena. Genres, in themselves, can contain tensions, they can merge, develop a history, die out, become hybrid, splinter and new genres can be created at any one moment. In this chapter I try to generate a sense of the heteroglossia potentially available to the participants of the study before I go on to discuss the way that individuals engaged with the specific genres available in their workplace in the following chapters.

#### **4.0.1 Political Commentary – contextualizing the debate**

Political commentary, whether one agrees with the speaker or not, is recognised as having an authoritative voice, be it of government or opposition. Mahendran (2003 see chapter 2) identifies our relationship with this type of genre as a dialogic relationship with the public sphere, although from a Bakhtinian point of view this is a sphere of centripetal and centrifugal tensions rather than an arena for rational discussion as proposed by Habermas (Gardiner 2004). The quotation from Blunkett (1998) at the start of the chapter is an illustration of the centripetal genre of commentary which tends to be that of government. This voices the imperative of transformational change to the education system, in conjunction with the improvement of skills in the workplace, to ensure economic competitiveness for the UK. Where skills are acknowledged to have improved this is not judged to be far enough. School leaders are doubly implicated in this discourse of skills enhancement as they are not only workers who need to develop their own skills, but also responsible for the skills of the pupils that they send out into the working world.

As the UK government uses policy to drive the upskilling of the workforce through the Skills Strategy<sup>5</sup>, the project to modernize education to provide a future workforce with higher skills levels is making a significant impact on what it means to be an educational leader in the UK.

Since 1997 the Labour Government in England has implemented a series of legislative and policy directives oriented towards the achievement of what policy writers call a 'shift change' in the thinking and practice of educational leadership (also implemented through the Workforce Remodelling agenda<sup>6</sup>). This modernization project (Alexiadou and Ozga 2002) seeks to make a cultural change within schools and to reframe the way that the school is organized in terms of workplace responsibilities. Teachers' workloads have been reorientated towards curriculum, planning and assessment of children's learning and the administrative tasks removed to support staff. Leaders, whilst managing change, should now focus on strategic and developmental issues (rather than the operational) and are directed by government to apply business management models to education to transform the way in which teaching and learning take place and to significantly improve children's achievements.

Such a substantial reworking of education provision has not gone uncontested and alternative voices are evident. These include what might be considered the established genres of resistance, such as the position of the National Union of Teachers who did not subscribe to the Remodelling Agreement and yet engaged in the debate at the level of policy discussions. Stevenson (2007) points out that in dealing with schools as workplaces the influence of the trade unions is often ignored. Educational research has tended to focus on the difficulties resulting from

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<sup>5</sup> World Class Skills: implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England Department of Innovation 2007

<sup>6</sup> January 2003, Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement, DSCF website.

the local implementation of a national policy agenda rather than considering employer/employee tensions in a particular organization, or across schools in relation to these issues. Other genres of resistance are also evident, for example the more covert genres of individual action that drew upon 'professional judgement' as some headteachers resisted implementation of the agreement by funding additional teachers rather than allowing Teaching Assistants to be in sole charge of a classroom (Hammersley-Fletcher 2006; Stevenson 2007).

The school as a workplace has a complicated relationship with authority and power, and notions of employer/employee relationships are less than straightforward. For teachers the Headteacher, the Governing Body and the Local Authority all act as close or remote employers within the legislative powers of central government. Headteachers relate to the Governing Body as employers, but are also publicly accountable via the OfSTED inspectorate and directly responsible for implementing national legislation and policy. As part of the reworking of the educational workforce revitalizing the leadership of schools is seen as crucial. As the second quotation from Jim Knight (2007) at the start of this chapter suggests, from this perspective headteachers are required to move away from the traditional model of headship to provide a leadership that can *'deal with the evolving demands our society is placing on schools both in raising standards and in the need to work seamlessly with partners throughout children's services and the wider community.'* (DfES, Johnson 2007:1). Yet the traditional model of school leadership has a considerable historical authority and is closely connected to ideas about the headteacher as individual leader, charismatic and powerful, a centralized figure within the school, and a voice for each individual school. In contrast, new models of leadership within this genre of political commentary envision *'headteachers leading across more than one institution or bringing people with expertise in particular areas into leadership teams or providing shared services for smaller schools so that more schools have access to high level HR and financial skills.'* (ibid:2)

The genre of political commentary has debates and tensions within it, but the chronotope and themes for government, opposition and other expert commentators are rapid change, orientation to a changing world of work and the evaluation of current educational achievement as being unsatisfactory. This political commentary and modernising agenda for school leadership, supported by centralizing and authoritative government policy, seeks to diversify the role of headship. Taking up, and endorsing, the Independent Study into School Leadership (PWC 2007) these ideas about leadership are associated with a policy strand that foregrounds dispersed power, disconnected from individual schools and buildings and seeks to disconnect the idea of leadership from the individual headteacher. However, other policy strands relating to accountability and performativity retain an individualistic approach. The theme of modernization is characterised by these tensions, but emphasizes change and displacement of the traditional links between individual and place.

As Mahendran (2003) indicates, heteroglossia is evident at the level of the words used. Words are important and reflect these competing models of leadership embedded within commentary and within government policies. The newer genres of commentary clearly challenge the traditional model of a headteacher for each individual school responsible for all aspects of that school's delivery, and older policies and practice can be seen to be moving in this general direction. The National Standards for Headteachers were revised in 2004 and reflect this 'evolving' role of headship for the 21st century (DfES 2004). The key areas for the 2000 and the 2004 versions of the standards are indicated below, these *'represent the role of the headteacher'* (DfES 2004). There are broader references to 'future', 'community', and, within the document references to 'beyond' the school. This indicates that whilst accountability and learning are still key areas, the headteacher is not only expected to be *'engaging in the development and delivery of government policy and*

*in raising and maintaining levels of attainment in schools in order to meet the needs of every child*<sup>7</sup> but also extending their role outwards and more broadly to engage with the local community and to take account of the ‘*community at large*’ (2004:2).

**Table 3 - National Standards for Headteachers (DfES)**

Key areas 2000	Key areas 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic direction and development of the school</li> <li>• Teaching and learning</li> <li>• Leading and managing staff</li> <li>• Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping the future</li> <li>• Leading Learning and Teaching</li> <li>• Developing Self and Working with Others</li> <li>• Managing the Organisation</li> <li>• Securing Accountability</li> <li>• Strengthening Community</li> </ul>

Becoming a headteacher through the traditional pathway of job promotions and experience of teaching is viewed as problematic from this policy perspective in terms of both the perceived demands of the role and the impending shortage of headteachers. Steve Munby, (Chief Executive of the NCSL) reiterates this with his comment that as the average age of a new primary headteacher is 42 ‘*we are going to have to change that [...] if we are going to have the quantity and quality of school leaders that we need.*’ (Munby 2007). This conflates changes in the role of headteachers with an anticipated shortage of headteachers from 2009 to 2011 and the NCSL’s programme for succession planning to deal with this.<sup>7</sup> The chronotope of career within this modernization genre is one of rapid development and youthfulness.

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<sup>7</sup> The issue of shortages has been challenged by MacBeath (2006) who argues that the shortages are regional and situational rather than a broad response to age demographics.

It is from the school as a workplace that most of these headteacher posts will be filled. Teachers in the process of becoming the leaders of the future are already practising within a workplace that is strongly influenced by government policy and directives, yet these workplaces carry a historic sense of place and profession. The workplace also has a strong relationship with teacher unions, but individuals have a range of opinions about the ongoing process of workforce reform. The way that the genre of political commentary is heard within the workplace is important for the way that individuals begin to evaluate leadership and alternative models of leadership. In terms of learning to lead, development programmes oriented towards these different models of leadership imply different conceptualizations of leadership knowledge. This has implications for the way in which future leaders learn in the workplace.

#### **4.0.2 Professional Commentary - adding to the debate**

Whilst aspiring leaders in English schools are at liberty to acquire training and development through any means, the career route to headship is clearly defined by government mandate that all headteachers now appointed must hold the NPQH. Implementing government policy, the NCSL can shape training and development in schools for an individual from graduation (the Fast Track programme) through middle leadership, headship and beyond, to consultancy. There is a dominant genre here, in Bakhtinian terms a monologic 'social language' of professionalism in English schools. To be a successful educational professional in the English primary school is to engage with the NCSL's framework for career progression and to gain the qualifications (e.g. NPQH) associated with this (discussed further section 4.1). This genre of career development is essentially centralizing and authoritarian in character, but contains tensions as other voices are evident within it. The nature of this national policy is to include and homogenize a range of ideas about leadership and education, however there are other authoritative voices concerning the nature of

professionalism in education and it is to these genres of '*professional commentary*' that I now turn.

The National Association of Head Teachers was established in 1897 and has over 28,000 members<sup>8</sup>, which now include Deputy Headteachers and the newly established role of Assistant Headteacher. This organization describes itself as providing '*dedicated support to its members and speak[ing] with authority and strength on educational issues covering early years, primary, secondary and special school sectors.*' (NAHT 2008) and uses its collective voice to comment on educational policy and practice at both the micro level (Ofsted letters to children after inspection) and the macro level (Every Child Matters agenda) (NAHT 2008). The headteacher at Peony Hill specifically referenced the NAHT as a source of learning and in her interview indicated that she would trust advice from this organization rather than the local authority. This collective representation of Headteachers as a professional body can be seen from a sociological perspective as an organization attempting to '*preserve or extend its own domain*' (Hammersley 2005) and as voicing a response to those outside the profession trying to influence and control its members.

The importance of the idea of professionalism for individual teachers and in terms of educational policy is illustrated by the debate about the relationship between educational reform and professionalism in teaching, and what changes to professionalism need to take place to facilitate the effectiveness of this reform (see Hargreaves 1994; Hammersley 2005, 2007; Stevenson et al. 2007). This debate is important as it not only illustrates the tensions within this social language of educational professionalism, but has associated implications for the way in which teachers and headteachers are educated. For example, Hargreaves (1994)

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.naht.org.uk/about/history.asp> (accessed 28.01.08)



identifies the pre-technocratic model linked to on-the-job apprenticeship, the technocratic model linked to the provision of academic study influenced by higher education institutions and the post-technocratic model, emphasising '*professional competences.... developed through experience and reflection*' and strongly advocates the latter position as the ideal. Hargreaves emphasises competences in professional performance here and argues that '*placement in the workplace is the key and integrative feature of initial training*' (1994:431). This initial training creates a '*competent beginner*' who is provided with continued professional development opportunities throughout their career. Stevenson et al. (2007) critique this approach, suggesting that CPD for headteachers (and teachers) is being used (by government) to promote a particular idea of professionalism within the context of the target driven performativity of the workplace.

Thrupp (2003) and Gunter and Rayner (2007a) have both spoken about dominant leadership discourses evident as part of the reform agenda and identify the idea of 'transformational' leadership as firmly placed within this agenda. Gunter and Rayner (2007a; 2007b) in particular, point to the tensions between '*official reform-driven leadership and professionally constructed leadership as a social and socializing practice.*' (2007a:59) and the consequences that this has for teachers, students and educational researchers who engage with a '*pluralist agenda*' (ibid:60). The alternative discourses of leadership that Gunter and Rayner propose have less clarity than their critique of transformational leadership, '*associated with role and hierarchy, where some elite people know best and build a commitment to followership.*' (2007b:5) Instead they propose leadership as a '*benign term for the exercise of power in ways that are relational and communal*' (ibid:6) located in educational institutions and about educational issues. This leadership is ideally a distributed property within organizations and has a resonance with 'collegial' leadership advocated by others (Bush 2003). For Gunter and Rayner this type of leadership in education has never been fully realized. Others would argue that both

formal/hierarchical and relational/collegial forms of leadership have always been present within schools and drawn upon in professional discussions. The key point is that ideas about professionalism and leadership are contested, and within this discourse there are tensions and contradictions. For Hargreaves (1994) a '*new professionalism*' is a driving force for the reform and the remodelling which Gunter and Rayner are so critical of here.

Practitioners in the workplace need to make sense of, and engage with, these competing discourses about policy and professionalism. Becoming an educational professional means engaging with this social language of professional commentary and a variety of possible evaluative positions. Entering into the discussion means taking up one's own evaluative position expressed through the utterance, the words used. The numerous meanings possible within the individual words connected with leadership are illustrated in Table 1 below. The use of the descriptive and attributive adjectives before the word 'leadership' illustrates both the variety of terms in current use, and how language is used to emphasize particular values inherent within the intended meaning of the term.

### **From the NCSL Leadership Network Conference**

**(Carter and Sharpe 2007)**

- Strategic leadership placed in opposition to Operational leadership
- Distributed leadership placed in opposition to Traditional leadership (hero head model)
- Managed leadership
- Multi-agency leadership
- Federated leadership
- Networked leadership
- Community leadership
- System leadership

The research literature retains a more historic perspective and many further adjectives can be identified. This is not an exhaustive list, but illustrates the way we continually try to pinpoint leadership at the level of abstract discussion.

- Transformational leadership
- Distributed, shared, collaborative and collegiate leadership
- Democratic leadership
- Charismatic leadership
- Transactional leadership
- Moral leadership
- Creative leadership
- Instructional leadership
- Middle leadership
- Subject leadership
- Teacher leadership

The importance of language is illustrated by Gunter and Rayner's (2007b) concerns about the language of leadership becoming disconnected from teaching (they cite the removal of QTS as a requirement for headship). This can be seen in the emphasis on 'community', 'multi-agency', 'networked' and 'federated' in the 2007 snapshot of leadership terms here. This echoes my comments about the language embedded in the National Standards for headteachers earlier. As I argued earlier, this variety of potential discourses, the heteroglossia, are not all equally constituted in terms of power and authority. The use of the term pluralist can obscure the fact that individuals position themselves, and are positioned differently, in relation to

these forces and this, in turn, impacts on how they are able to engage with these different discourses. It is this struggle over learning in the workplace (where the workplace has contested and different discourses of what it means to be a 'good' educational leader) that teachers, potential leaders and current leaders are engaging with as they learn to become leaders. One significant and powerful influence on learning in the school as a workplace, for teachers becoming leaders and for continuing leaders, is the NCSL.

#### **4.1 The NCSL and leadership development**

*'Our purpose is to improve the lives and life chances of all children and young people throughout the country by developing world-class school leaders, system leaders and future leaders.'* (NCSL 2007 website)

Established in 2000, the NCSL in England continues to have as one of its four corporate goals '*identify and grow tomorrow's leaders*' (2007) and it is responsible for overseeing the design and delivery of the National Professional Qualification of Headship (NPQH) which became a prerequisite for all those seeking their first headteacher post from 2004. The college provides a raft of leadership development programmes and is increasingly, through its remit from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (formerly the DfES), required to oversee the delivery of training to meet government objectives (a training target of 2,800 NPQH candidates and 400 Sure Start Children's Centre leaders in 2007 – 8). It also offers advice to government on the implementation of policy initiatives through training programmes and conducts and reviews research on leadership, being specifically tasked in 2007 to advise on new models of leadership.<sup>9</sup>

Whilst, as I have said, it could be expected that the NCSL as the implementation agent of specific government policies might be evident as an influence within the

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<sup>9</sup> DfES remit to the NCSL 10<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

workplace, three of the participants in the study were particularly involved with NCSL programmes. The deputy head had recently completed her NPQH, one curriculum leader was a 'Fast Track' candidate and the headteacher had participated in the LPSH (Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers). In terms of learning to lead within the school the practice of the NCSL could be expected to have particular significance. What, then, does the NCSL mean when it describes leadership development?

*'The term 'leadership development' describes a wide range of activities that can be both formal and highly structured, such as the programme leading to the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), or informal and unstructured – learning 'on the job'. Leadership development can be stimulated through reading, online learning, mentoring, coaching, problem and site-based approaches, internships, self-assessment diagnostics, collaborative learning groups, and via real and virtual networks. NCSL programmes use all these approaches to leadership development.'* (NCSL 2007)

Whilst the opening statement of this section about the 'purpose' of the NCSL clearly emerges from the modernization agenda, 'leadership development' is described more widely here and the focus seems to be on forms rather than definition. The statement tends to separate formal learning from 'on the job' learning despite the fact that even the formal programmes have a large workplace component (for example the workplace project, Simkins et al. 2006). However, understandings of what constitutes 'learning on the job' within the different formal frameworks (NPQH, LPSH, Fast Track etc) and a general emphasis on learning from experience, have shifted over the last three years. In 2004 the NCSL's strategy for leadership learning emphasized learning 'on the job', the individual's context and Kolb's (1984) learning cycle. This supported a general view of *'learning from concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation'* (NCSL 2004). This general developmental approach has shifted to one with particular and

specific intentions in relation to 'learning on the job' to resolve perceived problems with the '*quality and quantity*' of school leaders referred to earlier. Steve Munby's address to the NAHT conference in 2007 outlined four reasons for this:

1. *'Too many people are getting the qualification without going on to headship*
2. *Too many people come out with the qualification using the same vocabulary and have not developed their own individual leadership style*
3. *The role of the headteacher has changed and the NPQH needs to adapt further to that change*
4. *We now have a better understanding of effective leadership development and we know that most of the development and learning needs to take place on the job in a real context.'*

*(Munby 2007)*

The clear intent here is to change the individual's 'vocabulary' and 'style' of leadership through learning, albeit in a particular direction. This change has now resulted in the revised NPQH with an increased emphasis on entry assessment to improve the quality of candidates, coaching, feedback, action oriented learning and placements to diversify experience (NCSL Advice 2007). A new statement about the learning principles suggests that the NPQH should promote '*leadership thinking and behaviours required by highly effective heads*' and that this includes '*strategic thinking*' and '*contextual literacy*' (ibid:annex 3). Whilst collaborative, self directed and reflective learning are still part of the learning strategy, these strategies are closely linked to specific changes in behaviour aligned to the broad remodelling agenda of government policy. This trajectory emphasizes shared and distributed/federated leadership, integration of government-endorsed research and policy initiatives and a strategy of learning that starts with diagnostics such as the 360° appraisal and ends with more rigorous assessment by panel. There is an emphasis on the demonstration of leadership through the impact of leadership behaviour in terms of change measured through whole school assessments and children's achievements. (SATS results; Ofsted reports; SEF reports). As Bottery (2007) discusses, the tensions between creatively developing an '*individual*

*leadership style*' (item 2 above) and the '*norms of control*' that shape educational policy are in full play here; learners are asked to be creative, but are unlikely to have the confidence of Bottery's innovative and established headteachers to challenge the regulatory framework.

#### **4.1.1 The genres of competency, reflective practice and expansive learning – a composite approach**

The NCSL programme for headship emphasises a change in '*vocabulary*' and '*contextual literacy*' and seeks to change workplace practices through embedding these elements there. These changes, achieved through learning, suggest that individuals change in a particular direction, but it seems that not all learners that completed the NPQH programme also achieved this change (as noted in Munby's comments earlier). In order to counter this local resistance to change (intentional or unintentional) both individual coaching and a work placement in a different context are seen as the way in which individuals will learn to '*lead, manage and work within complex, multi-agency partnership environments with increased autonomy and clear accountability frameworks.*' (NCSL 2007 Advice) How learning at work is conceptualized and how it might inform learning for leadership are not explicit in this guidance, but my reading is that workplace learning here involves expanding particular opportunities in the workplace (finance, budgeting, performance management), engaging in learning for the particular context (primary, urban, rural) and the experience of alternative contexts through placements or work shadowing. (NCSL 2007:3)

In terms of the workplace learning this perspective suggests that schools offer opportunities for individuals to participate in what could be considered '*expansive*' (Fuller and Unwin 2004) learning opportunities that cross boundaries between settings. The provision of this type of expansive learning opportunity seems to be viewed as somewhat unproblematic. Specific learning that meets NCSL intentions is

assumed to occur as a result of this boundary crossing and it is intended to enable future headteachers to progress more rapidly to headship, supporting the succession planning strategy of the NCSL. Hartley (2007b) draws attention to the 'spatiality' in this language and that of recent educational policy (distributed leadership, extended schools, re-modelling) and the association with the culture of boundary crossing. He suggests that the language of expansion and co-working also serves 'a *legitimatory purpose*' (2007b:204) bolstering the economic function of these new ways of working. This expansive policy genre relates not only to where and how leaders might learn, but also to an expansion of the traditional professional role to fit the modernisation agenda referred to earlier. The genre expands the field of work to new organizational practices (the integration of different services for children at one site) and new professional identities (multi-agency professional leadership). The genre is centripetal and monologic as it pursues an integration agenda and silences alternative ways of working.

Closely associated with this expansive genre is one of competency development. What is being learnt here is a particular set of competencies that meet the requirements of the National Standards for Headship and the pedagogy associated with this genre is associated with direct instruction and standardization, subsumed to a regime of assessment with little room for professional autonomy (Harrison 2003). Competencies are matched to the new models of leadership as they expand, for example, the new *National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership* (NCSL 2008). Again, this genre can be understood as centripetal and monologic as individual ways of working with the curriculum, children and staff are prescribed and leave little room for innovation. There is an established critique of this move to competencies as demonstrating learning which argues that there is a disconnection between theory and practice – a lack of theoretical knowledge about the actions of the individual on the part of the individual. As with all learning genres, there are tensions within it as people engage dialogically with the issues of career



progression and the options available for them. Teachers clearly undertake competency-based awards even where they do not agree with the pedagogic method, taking a pragmatic approach to the career paths on offer.

An alternative genre of reflective practice is often called upon in the research literature and referred to in professional programmes, including those of the NCSL. This genre operates alongside and sometimes merges with that of competencies and standards. Hammersley (2007 E891) suggests that reflective practice can be traced prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but came to prominence in education through the work of Schön in the 1980's, later to be developed by many others (including Boud and Walker 2002; Usher et al. 2002). This genre is closely associated with professional autonomy, developing from experience over time and place, and develops theory through a direct reflection on practice rather than through research based knowledge. Reflective practice is a genre which can be found within the areas of competency and expansive learning discussed above, but as Harrison points out, here it is limited and rather than offering professional autonomy acts as a mechanism for learner '*self-management at a time of rapid and unpredictable change*' (2003:37). The subject of reflection is restricted to what the learner needs to know in order to achieve job specific accountability targets rather than areas of individual interest. Harrison (2003), Moore (1999) and Hargreaves (1994) argue that reflective practice and competencies can be framed as individualised, and I would argue that this also applies to the notion of expansive learning as used within the development programmes for school leadership available to learners. Expansive learning is also, under the revised NCSL guidelines, directed, specific and targeted towards the achievement of particular skills.

There is, however, another genre of learning which is also expansive in nature and has a different focus. This genre is one of collaborative learning, based on

connections and discussion across networks of professionals. This genre takes a socially situated and constructed view of learning developed through discussion and joint activity. Knowledge is created through joint problem solving and there is a facility for creativity and new ideas. This genre of expansive learning connects to the genres of professional commentary discussed earlier and can be seen as an attempt to carve out an alternative space to the dominant discourse of performance and measurement. Despite this, Thorpe and Kubiak (2005) have suggested that networks, while expansive across organizations, do not always offer this type of opportunity. There are issues of power and the focus can be restricted to issues of co-ordination rather than collaboration. Where new ideas and creativity flourish it can be difficult to implement and sustain novel and innovative approaches in an environment of competition between schools.

When discussing leadership development the NCSL can be seen to be drawing on each of these genres, creating a composite approach to learning with inherent contradictions and tensions that enable individual learners to draw on different aspects of the programme in different ways. This is evident in the difficulties of judging the success of the various leadership development programmes. Simkins et al. (2006) are characteristic of much research in this area when they comment on the multiplicity of influential factors and about the complexity involved in assessing such programmes. They highlight the generally positive outcomes for the individual participants of three NCSL programmes (LftM, NPQH, LPSH), the schools and the pupils, but point to variability in programme outcomes. This variability is the result of a number of factors that include: purpose, design, individual motivation, expectations placed on the school, the structure and culture of the school and '*external factors*' (which are not clarified). Simkins et al. highlight the dual frames of '*school improvement*' and '*leadership development*' that participants need to balance and interpret. They point to the reliance of the programme on the effective contributions of the three parties: the NCSL and its agents, the individual participant

and the schools and key players within them (Simkins et al. 2006). In summary, they argue that the factors are so complex as to make coherent evaluations of the relationship between leadership development and school improvement extremely difficult.

Simkins et al. (2000) acknowledge that their attempt to model how leadership development programmes impact on school leadership is essentially a linear one to which a number of variables are added and which draws on Leithwood and Levin's (2005) work tracing the effects of school leadership programmes in terms of pupil learning. Although the model has numerous variables, and is increasingly complex, the problems involved in linking cause and effect in complex and fluid situations remain. This type of model tends to adopt a view of differing environmental typologies as static backgrounds for people's actions and only implicitly deals with issues of workplace tensions, possible disagreement over the models of leadership proposed or policy and political disagreements about the overall direction of educational leadership as '*moderating factors*' (Simkins et al. 2006 Figure 1). I suggest that this type of model also takes an essentially individualistic and cognitive view of knowledge/learning at odds with much of the workplace learning literature which is based on situated and constructed models of knowledge (Boreham and Morgan 2004; Billett 2004b; Evans et al. 2006; Wenger 1998; 2002). It does not allow for the dialogic relation of people to changing events and situations and the potential inconsistency in people's behaviour as their knowledge develops in a relational rather than a linear way. Focussing attention on the way that knowledge is conceptualized in development programmes is important for learners and also in evaluating the relationship that learning programmes have with workplace activities. It is this issue that I deal with next.

#### 4.1.2 Leadership knowledge at work

In order to think about workplace learning some consideration of knowledge is required. The NCSL describe workplace knowledge as professional knowledge (NCSL 2007 Advice annex 2) and in the National Standards for Headteachers 'knowledge' is separated from professional qualities (skills, dispositions and personal capabilities) and actions. Knowledge in six key areas is summarized as '*knows about*' and particular items listed such as: '*Strategies to promote individual and team development*', '*Models of organisations and principles of organisational development*' and '*Statutory educational frameworks including governance*' (DfES 2004:4). The standards itemise 49 such statements about knowledge. This approaches knowledge as an 'object' to be acquired rather than a process of ongoing relationships between people, and reifies an outcome statement in the form of concrete and unchanging definitions (Sfard, 1998).

Nicoll and Harrison (2003) have argued that standards can contribute towards the production of particular identities through the operation of 'discursive work', the way that particular trajectories are developed for individuals being assessed against standards. This can be seen here in one example where the knowledge specified, '*Models of organisations and principles of organisational development*' is linked to the 'professional quality' of being '*committed to: Distributed leadership and management*', although there are clearly alternative models of educational and organizational leadership available within the literature. Knowledge of alternative models is required, but the '*actions*' involved clearly match policy objectives focussed on modernizing leadership. Also interesting in this official identification of knowledge is the disconnection between knowledge as a known object (reified by the document) and the commitment to '*professional qualities*'. There is a further disconnection between both of these and the desired '*actions*' in the workplace. The relationship between knowledge and action is an enduring theme in workplace learning literature and the connection between the two an ongoing point of debate in

workplace learning theory. Here, theory is applied to practice but through an action which meets policy demands.

The connection between knowledge and the learning required for work is often implicit rather than explicitly discussed by educators. As a consequence the impact of different pedagogic approaches for leadership learning is often ignored. Saunders (2006) begins to examine these connections in his paper on the way that theory narratives connect education to work. Using Saunder's framework, the NCSL programmes for educational leadership which, as I explain, emerge from a composite genre of development, take a pragmatic approach rather than having a consistent pedagogy. They draw from both the functionalist and boundary crossing theory narratives. The functionalist perspective emphasizes the structural requirements for the national education system and the boundary crossing narrative has an agentic emphasis located in context and the production of effective problem solvers for a working environment characterised by constant change. This highlights the contradictions within the composite genre of leadership development, working as part of a national policy agenda for change to the education system and the enactment of a learning strategy emphasizing expansive learning in the local situation to develop '*contextual literacy*' (NCSL 2007 Redesign).

From a different perspective Eraut (2001) suggests that the knowledge base for professional expertise has moved from a reliance on the theoretical to one assuming that expertise '*is based mainly on experience*' (2001:126) and he suggests that this perspective underplays the role of tacit knowledge in professional work. In his work Eraut (2000) aims to give theoretical leverage to notions of tacit knowledge and non-formal learning in professional learning at work and he acknowledges that '*the limitations to making tacit knowledge explicit are formidable*' and that:

*'The probability is that 'thick' tacit versions [of knowledge] will co-exist alongside 'thin' explicit versions: The thick version will be used in professional practice, the thin version for justification, for explaining transfer possibilities, for training purposes and in evaluative research' (2000:135).*

Again, this illustrates a potential tension between the explicit knowledge of required system changes in educational leadership and the ideas that are embedded in professional practice at the local level which may be varied and contradict the knowledge conveyed through national training programmes. The challenge for professional training seems to be to teach propositional knowledge and procedural knowledge (what and how) which will eventually through reinforcement and practice become shared and tacit knowledge, i.e. embedded in professional practice. Bennett and Marr (2003) argue that this top down approach is the dominant mode of CPD in English schools.

Individuals, however, engage with training, ideas and knowledge rather than uncritically absorbing them. They also access a wide range of ideas that relate to education and leadership from both their local workplace and the wider world, the public domain. Nespor (1994) takes a different approach to knowledge by disconnecting it from individual cognition or situated accounts and adopting a space – time process perspective:

*'To understand learning and knowledge it's just as essential to trace out the network structures and the political economy that sustains them as it is to study students' experiences in specific settings of pedagogy or practice. [These] are not different 'levels' of a process but different regions of a complex, highly interactive network.'* (1994:132)

Taking an actor-network approach, as Nespor does, allows connections to come to the fore and dissolves the distinctions between the local and the national that are so problematic as *'people are always interacting with distant entities that have been*

*materially or semiotically transported into the encounter'* (ibid: 33 Nespor's emphasis).

This approach also allows power back into the discussion. The issue of power is absent from the discussions of knowledge above, yet it is significant in terms of the workplace practices that are being shaped by policy and experienced by the workforce. For Nespor knowledge is intimately connected to the flows of power through space-time networks and teachers as members of these actor-networks are already *'participants in the control and manipulation of disciplinary flows'* (ibid:133). This connects teachers with their current experience of workplace practices to the learning of leadership practices as they become more proficient in *'Making other things mobile and acting upon them in your setting and moving yourself from one powerful setting to another'* (ibid:134). Rather than an individual trajectory for teachers, educational leadership is a disciplinary web of knowledge/power that is spatially and temporally organized, which both constructs and is constructed by actors as they assemble and mobilize aspects of their network. Whilst there is no end point, achievement of qualifications such as the NPQH enables further movement into the network for some and not for others who are members of differently assembled space-time networks. Nespor illustrates this point well by pointing to the issue of membership of professional fields:

*'If physics and management students were becoming 'alien' to people like me and others outside their fields it wasn't because they were being swallowed up in disciplinary apparatuses or having their lifeworlds colonized (to use Habermas's phrase); it was because they were moving in space-times that the rest of us don't – and increasingly can't – move in.'*  
(ibid:135)

I found Nespor's position in terms of knowledge and power persuasive and useful in connecting knowledge in the workplace not only to the national agenda but to any

other area that might be relevant for the participants concerned. But what are the limitations here? It seems clear that participants have differential access to discourses and what Nespor terms 'connections' to assemblages and networks. How might knowledge be mobilized by individuals within the workplace and how might the way that connections are or are not made available or possible for people significant here? In terms of teachers learning to be educational leaders there were some questions that arose in terms of workplace learning. To what extent might the actor-network for educational leaders be connected to that of teachers within the workplace? And in what ways do these spatial-time networks diverge as teachers move to become leaders involved in their own network and are increasingly disconnected from their previous teaching networks? The movement away from the language and currency of teaching that Gunter and Rayner (section 4.02, 2007b) are concerned about becomes significant here as an indicator of the disconnection between the networks of teachers and educational leaders.

The way that boundaries around the organization and different genres of leadership were in play in a particular organization seemed likely to have an immediate impact in terms of the connections and networks that would be available to prospective leaders. One of the ways that genres may, or may not, be accessed is through the pedagogic approach to learning that takes place within the workplace. Genres of pedagogy have long been implicated in both the structuring of knowledge and the access to knowledge that individuals have, and the idea of pedagogy is part of teacher education. An understanding of pedagogic strategies as part of workplace learning for adults therefore seemed to be something that I could expect teachers learning to be leaders to be aware of.



## **4.2 The heteroglossia of pedagogies in the workplace.**

In primary teaching there is a concern with pedagogy in relation to children's learning, and some discussion as to whether there are differences in the pedagogies for children and adults as learners (Knowles, 1996; Hanson, 1996). The idea of a pedagogic approach is firmly entrenched as part of teacher education (to deliver the curriculum) and closely associated with particular genres of learning, even where these genres of learning are broad and tensions exist within them. In view of this I show how within one approach, that of the NCSL, there are a number of genres which relate to pedagogy, with different implications for relations between people within an organization.

The four core development experiences for the NPQH listed by the NCSL (2007 Redesign, annex 4) are:

- coaching
- placement in a different context
- engagement with the NCSL research/policy agenda
- engagement with self directed peer groups

The learners are now called 'Trainee Headteachers' in an explicit move to change the language and therefore the 'mindset' of learners. The mode of delivery continues to involve a mix of study at Masters level, online activities and residential opportunities. Learning is personalized, both in length of time that the programme might take to complete and in the study pathway taken following an initial formative assessment. I suggested earlier that the approach to learning by the NCSL fits broadly within a composite genre with core features of individualism and competency, but acknowledge that there are tensions as other ideas about learning are visible. The pedagogic strategy envisaged by the NCSL can be viewed as connected to this, but containing a number of approaches which reflect some of these tensions. Firstly, one approach views learning as following from observation, modelling and direct instructions – essentially a genre characterised by a

transmission model of knowledge (coaching, placement, direct application of the best practice literature). The second genre is one that takes a view of learning as engagement, through talk and texts a wider range of ideas (peer groups, NCSL units of study). There is a third genre that is not explicit here, and seems to be increasingly silenced by the policy genre of remodelling – that of learning from experience (learning journals, reflective practice, longer time frame of school years and staged career progression). In the next sections I want to outline these three genres as their different associations are important for the way in which leadership learning takes place in an individual setting.

#### **4.2.1 Connections between people - observation and modelling**

As I have said above (sections 2.13 and 4.11), boundary crossing is considered to facilitate learning in terms of direct observation of different practices either in the same, or different, settings. Shadowing, work placements, apprenticeship and coaching all utilize aspects of observed behaviour as a model or demonstration of practice, either with or without direct explanation. In education, as in medicine there is a traditional assumption about, and reliance on, 'good' role models as part of the 'informal' curriculum (Paice et al. 2002) for leadership. Paice et al. suggest that role models are the way in which professional values, attitudes, and behaviours are transferred generationally, with an inbuilt tendency to conservatism, but ask the valid question (in terms of doctors) as to whether these are the values, attitudes and behaviours that will be relevant for 21st century medical practice. Applied to education this reprises the tensions between the social languages of political commentary where the headteacher is viewed as a new type of organizational leader for the C21st and those of professional commentary where the headteacher is an individual leader and teaching professional. As in the medical profession the educational leadership programme has traditionally depended on good role models as part of a leadership curriculum, but rarely states what is meant by 'good' in the context of current leadership practice. Carrington and Skelton (2003) argue that the

idea of 'role models' is now used in both popular (common-sense) and policy discourse in an unproblematic and taken for granted way. Within the policy discourse concerning school leadership successful and effective leadership is judged via Ofsted inspections, pupil performance and the NSCL programme for consultant leaders. Role models for headteachers are therefore drawn from those who have successfully negotiated and managed government policy agendas. The view of headteachers as role models within this genre of learning is one that is uniformly positive and more than this, that learning through observation of role model activity is unproblematic.

Learning through modelling is not restricted to simple imitations of behaviour; it includes adoption of styles, ambitions and plans for the future alongside learning how to 'think' about issues, morals and ideas. Bandura (1986) identifies three types of model: individual people, symbolic models (people or characters in films, television the media) and modelling through verbal instructions, either directly by people or via other mediums. Those learning to lead may directly experience all three types of model in the workplace, but there are problems with the way in which transmission of knowledge is explicit and intentional or tacit and unintentional here. The relationship between role model and learner is complex, and indeed there may not be a 'relationship' where the model is symbolic. Because Bandura adopts an individualistic genre of learning that conceptualizes knowledge as transmitted and acquired it is difficult to predict engagement with any particular model and the subsequent influences on a particular learner.

More recent developments in the way that the role model construct is applied move towards a constructive version of learning. Gibson (2004) presents a view of role models as *'active, cognitive constructions devised by individuals to construct their ideal, or "possible" selves based on their own developing needs and goals'*

(2004:135). He goes on to separate out the identification and learning aspects of role models and reasserts the active involvement of the learner as able to '*actively observe, adapt and reject attributes of multiple role models*' (ibid 136). Important here, for my study, is the idea of the evaluation of role model behaviour leading to adoption or rejection of specific actions by the learner. This connects to what Bakhtin calls the internally persuasive dialogue of an individual and the development of the evaluative note. Individuals make judgements about the behaviour and social interaction of others around them and role modelling may not result in a particular behaviour change.

Gibson develops a framework for role models which includes structural and cognitive dimensions. The structural dimensions refer to the social distance and status between the role model and the learner (close/ distant; up/down), and the cognitive dimensions refer to the positive/negative and global or specific attributes of the model as they are perceived by the learner (Gibson, 2004 Table 2 p144). He goes on to point out that there has been a lack of focus on 'negative' role models, particularly within organizations, in terms of how closely models work with the people who they may influence. This does not suggest that the person is viewed wholly positively or negatively, but that

*'An individual may have role models whom they consider generally positive, but have attributes they would rather not emulate; they may also have role models with a predominance of negative traits, a "global" negative role model or "anti-model" although this is rare.'* (Gibson 2004:145).

Gibson's far more active concept of the role model suggests that the process of learning is social and constructed rather than a matter of acquisition. The construction of a composite role model through using bits and pieces of various role models and creating a composite '*imaginary leader*' moves close to Gronn and Lacey's notion of '*anticipatory socialization*' (2004:147) where teachers use internal dialogue to imagine how they might have acted as leader in a particular situation.

This imaginary future can be conceptualized as an 'ideal self' and Val Singh and colleagues, in a small piece of empirical work with 10 women specifically about learning from role models, asked how women moved towards this ideal self. They found that most participants had multiple role models that were close to the individual. Much of the learning identified by these participants concerned leadership and was obtained '*from watching their bosses managing and developing people*' (Singh et al. 2006). These women also included comments about negative as well as positive behaviour, and indicated that they attended to this and made efforts in their own behaviour to avoid these negative actions. Again, this suggests that the direct experience of leadership is crucial to learning and boundary crossing to model from other leaders could be perceived as expanding learning through extending the repertoire of leadership models available. Leaving to one side the issue of whether a learner can initiate new behaviours on return to the original workplace after a placement, what is unknown in such placement opportunities is the type of leadership that will be experienced and which aspects of any leadership model will be positively or negatively received by the learner.

#### **4.2.2 Learning through talk and text**

The study of talk in organizations predates what Alvesson and Kärreman term the '*linguistic turn in organizational research*' (2000). A long tradition of communication studies has discussed communication strategies in the light of organizational objectives and focussed on the effectiveness and clarity of communication for instruction giving, teamwork etc. These texts often take a 'transmission' view of communication where language is viewed as a transparent conductor of meaning – and take the view that adults work more effectively in organizations where there is 'clarity' of communication. Alongside this organizational view of communication there are other competing ideas about language in schools. Teachers are aware of

the debates about teacher-led and child-led discussion in the classroom and the implications of each. In particular there have been national debates about the nature of the National Literacy and Numeracy Hours which have enshrined a pedagogic principle of teacher as deliverer of information to the whole class in a teacher-led session. Mercer (2004) and Rampton (2006) suggest that teachers in the classroom frequently use questions and an 'Initiation-Response-Followup/Feedback' (IRE or IRF) pattern of interaction in their exchanges with children, even where they encourage the elaboration and talk of children within their teaching goals. There is a clear asymmetry in the interaction here where the teacher has the authoritative voice and is responsible for shaping the learning. This pedagogic approach of adult-led delivery contrasts with another view of talk within teaching, that of socio-cultural approaches which prioritize children's interactions and collaborative activities as more effective ways of developing children's thinking (Howe and Mercer 2007; Mroz et al 2000). However, as Mercer (2000, 2004) points out, opportunities for the latter type of communication are clearly controlled within the classroom.

Far less attention has been paid to talk in terms of adult learning amongst staff members. However, a review of the NCSL website emphasizes the importance of collaboration, talk, sharing and discussion as active ways in which leadership development activities are promoted (accessed 15.02.08). There are also on-line communities for current and future leaders to promote discussion and shared experiences in the expectation that this will enhance individual development. Nicola, as a Fast Track candidate, was automatically designated a member of such an on-line community, but she disclosed that she had not taken part in any discussion. The key pedagogic issue here is what Mercer (2004) terms the development of '*common knowledge*' which can then be used by individuals to enhance their own thinking. The expectation is that exposure to a range of discursive opportunities across schools will offer an expansive picture of the possibilities that exist in terms of

organizational leadership for individuals to evaluate and discuss in their own settings.

In terms of adult engagement with texts – reading and writing as learning activities – I could find very little explicit discussion in relation to leadership learning in the educational research literature or as part of the NCSL information about this. There seemed to be an assumption that teachers would engage unproblematically with reading, designed units and on-line communications. In terms of both talk and text there seemed to be an overall genre of individual learning styles and individualistic learning that made assumptions about adult learners. Teachers, as learners, would be self-aware and engaging in this type of learning would be unproblematic; teachers would be able to self-select learning opportunities to suit themselves from the talk and texts made available.

This approach is evident in the genre of teaching texts that are presented for potential and existing leaders to read at the front of the NCSL website: *What leaders read key texts from the business world; What leaders read key texts from the educational world.* (NCSL website accessed 9.11.07). Here the government sponsorship of business and market ideas to educational leaders is an explicit endorsement of particular boundary crossing between two knowledge discourses being presented to future leaders, and learners are expected to make sense of this. These texts are further divided into genres that can be identified as research based, practitioner narratives of practice, self-help and motivational. The learners' encounter with these texts is dialogic, not only in the reading of the texts, but in the choices made available to them and the management of these choices by the endorsement of the NCSL of particular texts. The chronotope of time in this genre of learning through texts is forward looking, seeking change and that of the new. The most recent texts and latest research are endorsed. The NCSL takes an authoritative position here in selecting and presenting the material, but these texts

are always read through the primary genres of practitioner experiences at a local level. This local element adds an unknown range of diverse discursive influences that shape how learning is to be done and what is to be learnt.

### **4.2.3 Learning from experience**

The characterization of adults as capable and able learners is also reprised in the way that learning from experience is used as a pedagogic strategy. Here though, there are explicit pedagogic tools for framing experience and different expectations for learners over time. These tools are drawn from the idea of the learning cycle (Kolb 1984) and developed through a variety of methods including a focus on learning styles (Honey and Mumford 1986), reflective practice (Schon 1983,1987) and developed by others for example Boud and Walker (2002). This genre of learning from experience is well established over time and closely linked to common-sense understandings about career progression. For example, in schools the idea of learning from experience is closely associated with the school year as a marker of experience and, de facto, learning. (e.g. The NQT year that enables a new practitioner to achieve QTS) The association of different types of learning with career stages (Ribbins 2003) and the long history of a linear advancement to headteacher through the route of curriculum leader, year leader and deputy headteacher are each measured at the pace of the school year. As Munby (2007) points out, the number of years in each post has meant that time is required to achieve headship – historically up to 20 years. There are tensions here as the push to remodel the workforce, discussed at the start of this chapter, means that the association between time, in the sense of school years, and experience, is being increasingly disconnected. Programmes such as the Fast Track (to leadership) programme and teacher shortages seem to be increasing the likelihood that teachers will move across and up the career ladder at a far more rapid pace than



previously. The intended time to deputy headship for Fast Track candidates is five years.

Learning from experience is also a genre of learning which can privilege the normative and traditional, echoing Paice et al's (2002) earlier comments about the inherent conservatism of role modelling. Usher et al. (2002) add that reflections on personal experience can also tend to be monological, separating the self from the world and objectifying the past as a means to transform events into a bankable item of personal knowledge. This locates learning from experience within the acquisition metaphor of learning used by Sfard (1998). Usher et al. take a view of experience as *'invested with a multiplicity of meanings'* and take the dialogic view that *'even within any one articulation, the meaning of experience is never permanently fixed'* (2002:88) It seems though, that the pedagogic approach to which teachers as learners are exposed is more likely to follow the acquisitional approach to reflection, as evidence of such reflection is produced for the portfolios of achievement that are required to demonstrate the leadership competencies of the leadership awards.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter I began by describing the school as a workplace which is characterized by tensions between a strong reformatory policy agenda and a sense of professionalism in teaching drawn from an historic background and contested ideas about what 'good' school leadership should be. By exploring the range of genres within the centripetal and authoritative approach of the NCSL leadership development programmes, and indicating the possibilities for a wider array of discourses about school leadership, I have tried to illustrate the multiplicity of positions that school leaders are exposed to and work within. The tensions and contradictions between and within these genres demand that leaders, and those learning to lead, evaluate these debates and their own position in relation to them.

My view is that this is not an entirely personal process. I suggest that the boundaries within and around an individual organization can shape the way in which individuals are able to access these genres and that this centres our attention on workplace learning as crucial to an understanding of the development of both current and future school leaders.

## Chapter 5

### Organizational boundaries, school time and engagement with the heteroglossia.



**The back gate**

In chapter two I discussed boundaries as physical, social and symbolic, and suggested that the way in which organizational boundaries are constructed can impact on learning within an organization. In chapter four I indicated the range of ideas about school leadership that might be available within the heteroglossia. In this chapter I investigate the relationship between organizational boundaries and learning to lead at this particular school through data gathered as I talked to staff and listened to their discussions about children, parents, timetabling, assessment and many other issues which were raised during formal and informal conversations. I begin with INSET at the start of the school year and consider the way that the school staff maintained and constructed boundaries. Time, in particular, was a significant element here, and I go on to discuss the way that the different ideas about time within the career plans of the key participants seemed consequential for the way in which learning was connected to boundary crossing. Through this description of the boundaries of the organization and the career reflections and intentions of those learning to lead I explore the way in which the participants began to engage with the heteroglossia.

## **5.1 Management of internal and external pressures**

Peony Hill School had strong boundaries in relation to space, time and social contacts and these were closely managed by the headteacher, Beth. The particular boundaries that were constructed related to the immediate and historic internal and external environments impacting on the school. The attractive geographical position of Peony Hill School in the South East of England meant that many of the parents were affluent and well educated. The parents had high expectations of their children in terms of educational ability and high expectations that the school would deliver excellent results and a challenging curriculum. The school also received children from the outlying villages, again, many of whom were from privileged backgrounds. There were however also children from families with a long historic association with the town, some of whom were from a traditional rural farming community with a rather different economic profile. The attraction of the area has consequences. House prices are high and beyond the capacity of many teachers, particularly NQTs. The local authority offers a 'Key Worker' housing scheme in the nearby, larger urban area, but the school still found it difficult to attract new staff. Local authority reorganization of the school system (losing year 7 and gaining year 3) had meant that at the end of the previous term five teaching staff members had left and the new term began with the appointment of five NQTs, almost one third of the teaching staff complement of 16. These two issues, the large proportion of new and inexperienced staff and the pressure of an affluent, eloquent and demanding parent group, were significant influences on the way that Beth, the headteacher, managed the boundaries of the school (Beth, Fieldnotes and interview). Although, as I shall show, the entire leadership group was actively involved in boundary construction both on its own behalf and under her direction, the influence of the headteacher was paramount.

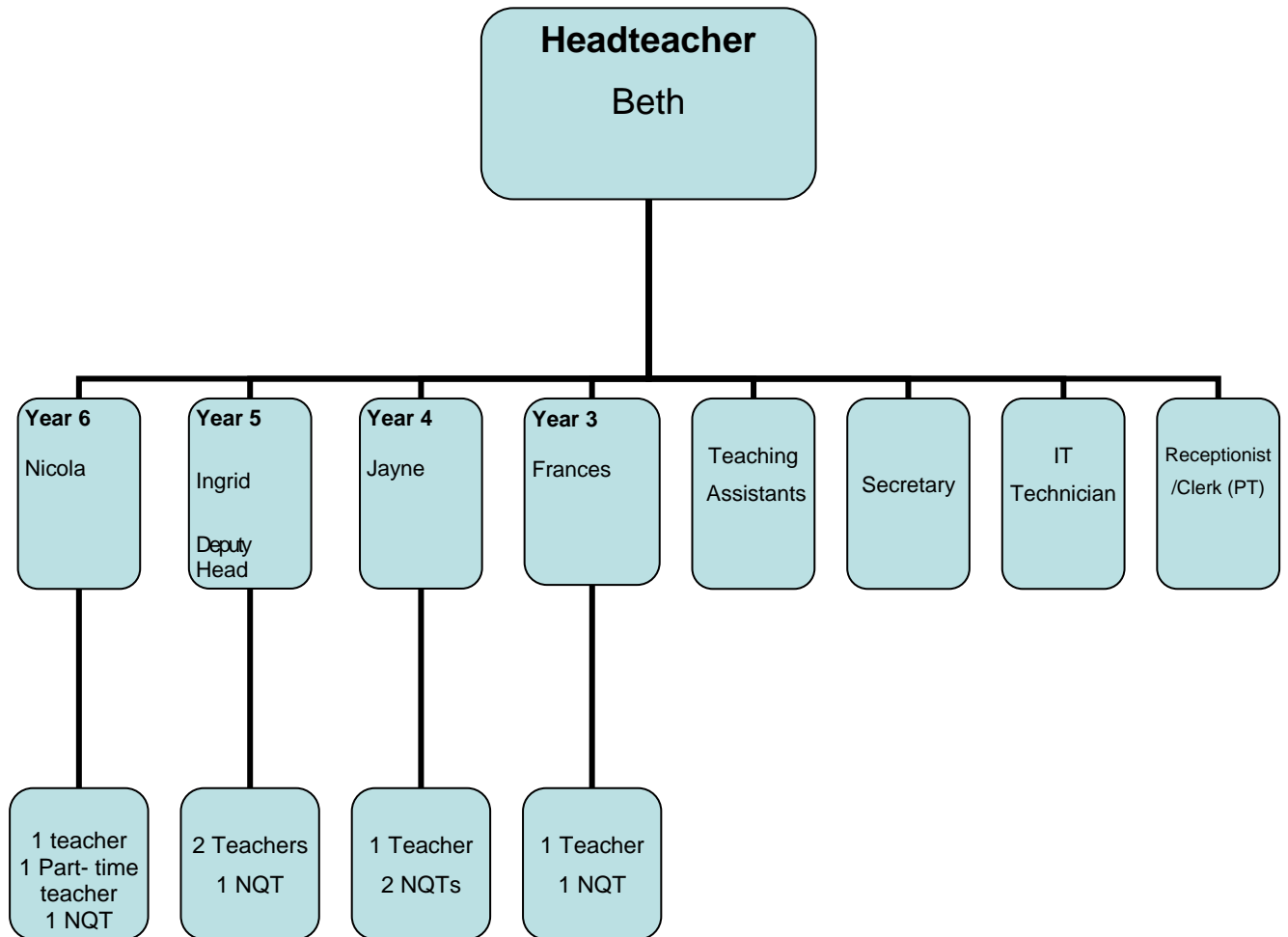
My research involved the whole staff team, but the main focus of the research was leadership and the five designated leaders in the school were the people that I interviewed, attended meetings with and followed up points of interest during discussions. The five leaders each had different views of their current role and the possibilities for their future career in terms of leadership. The table below briefly outlines their different perspectives.

**Table 5 - Roles and career planning**

<b>Current role</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Time scale</b>
Headteacher (Beth)	Retirement	2 to 3 years
Deputy head (Ingrid)	Non- specific, but Headship implied	Not stated (achieved during study)
Curriculum Leader (Nicola)	Deputy headship	Within 2 years
Curriculum Leader (Frances)	Return to full time teacher role	At the end of this year
Curriculum Leader (Jayne)	Deputy headship, consultant/trainer	Over the next several years, the longest and most non-specific. Mentions her second 5 year plan during the interview.

The structure of the school is represented at Figure 1 which also identifies these main participants. (Names have been changed to preserve confidentiality)

**Figure 1 - Peony Hill School**



### **5.1.1 Creating the organization anew – boundaries as constituting the staff group.**

The agenda for the INSET sessions at the beginning of the term illustrates the priorities given to time, physical and social boundaries and identifies the knowledge perceived by Beth as essential for staff to make a successful start to the school year.

**FIRST 3 DAYS BACK.**

**Please bring your diary, pen and notebook with you.**

**Monday 4th September**

8.30am Getting to know you – Jayne  
9.00am School Information, dates and times – Beth  
9.45am Maths, written methods and resources – Ingrid Mays  
Break  
10.45am Marking and presentation – Beth and Ingrid Mays  
12.00pm Lunch  
1.00pm Reading – Beth and Melony  
2.00pm Professional time

**Tuesday 5th September**

8.30am ICT – Celia  
9.30am Professional time  
12.30pm Lunch, NQT's to meet with Beth and Ingrid  
1.15pm Team Leaders meeting  
2.00pm Housekeeping  
2.30pm Professional time and set up tea and coffee for new parents

**Wednesday 6th September**

8.15am Year 3 and 4 teachers to be in their classrooms  
Rest of staff to check the children are ok as they come into school NM = Door A, DC = Door B, NO = indoor steps, DJ = Y3 area, JN = Y4 area, MJ and BU rear playground and IM and NG front of school.  
8.50am New parents are invited for coffee in NG's room and are to enter school via the front door  
10.50am Break – All Year 5 and 6 staff to go out on duty  
12.10pm Lunch – All Year 5 and 6 staff to go out on duty  
3.00pm Year 5 and 6 staff to be out in same places as the morning as children leave.

**Document 1 - INSET timetable 4th September 2006**

Firstly, the explicit instruction to bring '*diary, pen and notebook*' establishes Beth's position in relation to the staff as the giver of instructions and here implies that, despite the fact these are adult workers, they need reminding of these basic expectations. Beth was very aware of their newness, and despite the use of the word '*back*' implying that people were returning after the summer holidays, she and the deputy head, Ingrid, expressed a high level of concern about the large proportion of NQTs in the staff group. Of the five leadership posts the three Curriculum leaders (CLs) were newly appointed and both Jayne, who was new to

the school, and Nicola, who had only just completed her NQT year, were new to leadership. Frances had temporarily worked as a year leader within the school in the past. Hernes (2004) suggests that it is the establishing of rules and regulation that *'regulate human action and interaction'*. Beth needed to use these two days effectively to convey the rules and regulations to these new staff members and establish both her authority as headteacher and intention to instruct.

The INSET agenda also illustrates the concern with the physical boundaries of the school and the marking of space throughout the school by the posting of teachers on the entrances and exits to the building (see Wed 6th). This use of the headteacher's power to monitor exits and entrances ensured that the physical boundaries of the school were closely maintained and regulated at all times. This regulation was itself an expression of the tense relationships with parents that Beth constantly referred to in her conversations with me and with the other CLs. The monitoring of entrances and exits clearly marked where the headteacher's responsibilities for the children began and ended (with the school day). The unapproved crossing of this physical boundary by adults and children presented problems for Beth. Control of the spatial aspects of the building related closely to her responsibilities for the children and their safety. On the 20th October, prior to the whole school INSET session this issue was raised again,

**Before the session starts Beth raises what has just happened in the corridor outside at the end of school (also seen by me). People came into the school. These were not parents, and no parents are allowed in the school at the end of the day. It transpired that some adults were taking children to an after school karate club, but had come in through an open door. All doors are supposed to have a member of staff standing at them at the end of the day (There is a rota on the staffroom wall). Beth just reminds generally about this. A staff member from yr 6 immediately responds (defensively?) and a short discussion ensues about where people should be standing. Beth clarifies and then moves on to praising the staff for dealing with the difficult behaviour of the children that day (particularly in year 4)**  
(Observation note 20.09.2006)



Yet the school needed to maintain good relationships with parents by allowing them in to see children's work and the work of the school. On another occasion the closed boundaries are opened up for a school Open Day, and Beth tries to control this by asking parents to sign in and out of the school during the afternoon. Parents do not always comply and Beth finds this lack of control very stressful. She talks to me when I arrive at the end of the open day afternoon. I find her standing by a round table in the entrance lobby, strewn with A4 sheets of paper that were intended for parents to sign their children in and out of the school. Our conversation is intermittently interrupted by parents and children leaving at the end of the open day. Beth has clearly stopped trying to get them to sign out, and is just politely thanking them for coming; she can check that the children are with their parents/carers by sight.

**Beth talks about how chaotic and difficult this has been. She seeks agreement from Ingrid and asks her to describe the afternoon to me. Ingrid agreed that it had been stressful, especially when parents were coming in and going out at the same time. All the parents had been escorted by teachers to the classrooms and Ingrid commented 'I don't know how many miles I've walked back and forth'. She had 'caught' some parents trying to leave by the back gate, which was locked, and redirected them through the front door. The side gate had been open, but Ingrid commented that there had been a member of staff catching people there too. Ingrid seems tired, but not so agitated over the way the afternoon has gone as Beth.**

**(Observation note 20.10.2006)**

As the year went on, and parents became more familiar with the school and staff, it became increasingly difficult for Beth to manage the physical boundary around the school. Newsletters to parents and instructions to staff about Parents Evenings and contact with parents became increasingly specific as the year progressed in an effort to regulate and control this physical boundary.

**On being late – before and after school!**

Children are expected to be in their classrooms, seated and ready to work by 8.45 and this means that they must be in the building by 8.40. We open the doors at 8.30 and the children take part in brain gym activities or discussions with their teachers before registration. The doors used by the children (always supervised by Mrs Upton and/or Miss Mays) are closed at 8.40 and children then come in to school via the main entrance. After 8.40 they are signed in as late because by the time they have hung up their coats and sorted out lunchboxes and playtime snacks the register has already have been taken.

Parents are asked to ensure their children arrive at school by 8.40.

At the end of the school day teachers supervise the children as they leave the premises. Parents are responsible for their children's journey from the school gate to home. We are aware that there are times when parents are unavoidably held up – often due to road works in and around [the town] – and therefore remind children to come back into school if the adult collecting them is not there at the end of the day.

(Jan 07 newsletter - extract)

The physical boundary of the school gate is clearly identified here as a demarcation between the school and parents in terms of responsibility for the children.

**5.1.2 Generating a group voice**

The tendency to close and closely monitor the physical boundary also impacted on the communication between parents and staff. The content of the discussion during the limited opportunities to meet with teachers became closely controlled and parents unable to access the school when the boundaries were opened (during parents' evenings) were not offered alternative appointments. Staff were given detailed instructions about what was to happen and how to conduct the contact with parents. Examples below are from the October Newsletter, discussed at the Year 3 team meeting on 10th October 2006 and the Curriculum Leaders meeting (SMT) on 17th January 2007.

### Parents' Evening – Thursday 19th October, 4 to 7pm

In organising a programme of parents' evenings throughout the year we aim to please as many people as possible – but, of course, not everyone wants the same pattern. Some parents want to talk about Maths and English progress at each meeting; others are far more interested in talking about how their child is responding to the wider curriculum. Having talked to parents and surveyed their views through questionnaires, we have 4 parents' evenings per year, with a different focus for each meeting. This term's appointments are with class teachers and the aim is to discuss:

- how well the child has settled into the new year group
- progress/interests in subjects other than English and Maths
- attitude to work and homework
- areas of strength and interests

Appointments are 5 minutes each and class teachers will not discuss progress in Maths and English – these conversations will take place at the meeting with the subject teacher in January. ***All teachers will, however, contact parents as soon as they have any concerns about a child's progress in any area of the curriculum – we do not wait until a Parents' Evening.***

Completing the appointment request form:

- complete one form per family
- ensure your child's class and class teacher are correctly completed
- return it to school as soon as possible

Please note:

- we do not arrange alternative appointment times if you are unable to attend on Thursday 19th
- we cannot offer more than one appointment per child

Open Afternoon – Friday 20th October

You are invited to visit your child's classroom on Friday 20th October between 1.45pm and 2.45pm. The children will all have a task to do and you may wish to join in or to simply sit and look at books with your child. Class teachers will not be able to talk to you about your child's progress at this time. Parents will be able to take their own children with them when they leave at the end of the afternoon.

(Newsletter October 2006)

In the year group meeting this does not seem so clear cut. Frances, the Curriculum and year leader starts the discussion.

Frances	parents evening. I need to double check folders and 4 books including maths and English but no discussion about these. BU will talk to us about this [maths and English issue]
Nathan	but how will we deal with parents questions about this?

They discuss this issue, and Nathan (an NQT) resolves to make a note if parents make specific enquiries. They move on to a lack of contact with some parents, Nathan expresses concern. Frances suggests that if there is a major concern they should already have been in touch with the parents, or that the parents would already have contacted them

Nick *yep, parents are coming into the classes*

Frances *Friday*

Nathan *the last Friday of term*

Frances *I need to clarify how that's going, [she looks at her notes from SMT] for 1 hour, not with you the whole hour, but I'm not sure if children can go home with parents at the end*

Nick *books will be out,*

Frances *but we are doing a whole class activity, an easy one. Not all parents turn up. How about design/draw pictures*

Nick *of the Anglo Saxon house, put people in*

Frances *suggests brainstorm and choices [to give parents and children ideas]*

(Year 3 meeting 10th October – 183 :193)

Beth's dissatisfaction with the way that the Open Day and the parents evening had gone meant that she had resolved that the next parents evening be more clearly organized. Following discussion at the January SMT meeting she puts the instructions in writing.

**PLEASE READ AND ADD INFORMATION TO YOUR DIARY.**  
**Notes from SMT meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> January**

Parents' Evening Organisation – 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> Jan

- Lessons end 2.50 on Wed – back to classes to put books into chdn's parents' eve folders BU to check if EY has these
- ONLY English and maths books to go in chdn's folders
- Folders in green large trays in hall in class groups
- NO maths/English in books Wed and Thurs
- Maths/Eng teachers keep books once parents have seen them – small trays provided to one side of your desk – BU to arrange
- Any change to child's current classes to be discussed with parents
- Please discuss **PROGRESS** since Sept and our initial assessment – *we haven't done a formal reassessment (yrs 3 , 4, 5)*
- Please use laptops for any notes you have made – BUT MAKE SURE PARENTS CANNOT SEE OTHER CHDN'S COMMENTS

Here the content acceptable for discussion is clearly specified, and the details of the physical ordering of the encounter are also apparent in the collecting back of the school books.

This concern with achieving consistency and a common approach throughout the staff group had a direct impact in the way that INSET had been set up and on other training opportunities for the staff. The headteacher's dissatisfaction with training offered by the local authority had resulted in all the INSET training taking place within the school (Fieldnotes 08.06.06). This was usually run by the members of the leadership group, but on a few occasions by invited speakers or other staff members. Beth took a proportion of the INSET sessions, either herself or jointly with others, and had the major role in planning the sessions for the year. Her priorities at the start of the year were to raise the standard of ICT across the staff group and to ensure that assessment and teaching methods were consistent throughout the new staff group, with particular referencing to the NQTs. The physical boundaries of the school were not only clearly marked in terms of parents and children, but also in terms of the staff allowed to cross this boundary to move out of the school to network, attend training and development or develop professional links.

### **5.1.3 External connections**

Beth, as headteacher, belonged to a number of networks; the 'cluster' group for local headteachers, the networks that she developed as a long standing headteacher, and she attended the headteacher's national conference. Ingrid, as deputy, attended the Deputy Head's group and was active in this group in planning cross-authority sports activities. Nicola continued as a 'Fast track' (NCSL) to leadership candidate, but was not released in school time and so attended her residential course during the Easter Holidays. She was in contact with her mentor

via email and had termly assessment meetings with Ingrid as her in school assessor. Nicola was also able to attend a number of other, more local, professional development opportunities and Frances and Nicola continued with the 'Building Learning Power' initiative. This was a programme disseminated by the Local Authority and they had started this together in the summer of 2006. Jayne was asked to take on the role of PHSE co-ordinator and began a course during the September 2006 term for this (accredited). She attended a few sessions outside the school, but commented at the end of the year that there had been so much work in putting the portfolio together that it had put her off doing further courses. Significantly, none of the other teaching staff were permitted to attend training courses or sessions outside the school, and this included the NQTs, who did not attend the local authority sessions for NQTs to network and receive support. Nicola commented on this restrictive approach to external links at the end of the year,

<i>'Nicola</i>	<i>that can look like favouritism to other staff though, I don't think that's been well received</i>
<i>Ann</i>	<i>what, just the team leaders get to go out and do things</i>
<i>Nicola</i>	<i>yep</i>
<i>Ann</i>	<i>nobody else does</i>
<i>Nicola</i>	<i>mmm'</i>

(Nicola Interview 2 May 07)

Organizational boundaries offered not only a clear structure that set the whole school apart from parents, other schools, the LA and NCSL, but also made a clear distinction between the affordances (Billett 2004a,b) for networking available to the leaders within the organization and other staff. The tendency to closure of the whole school organizational boundary seemed to be an attempt to generate a group voice (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003) and this applied to all staff within the school. The limited opportunities to access wider networks were restricted to the leadership group, and even there were very constrained for all but the headteacher and her deputy. One of the reasons given for this during the group feedback session was

the problem of time which I address both here and in chapter 6, but first of all I want to consider the way that the workplace constituted a curriculum for leadership learning within the school.

#### **5.1.4 The intentional curriculum and the pathway to leadership.**

Each school as a workplace has a very clear series of development activities for teaching staff that take place through five INSET days each year. These sessions were planned on a termly basis by Beth, sometimes in consultation with the curriculum leaders. During the Autumn term in particular these activities were focussed on ensuring consistency across the teaching staff of the school and to ensure that the NQTs were familiar with school procedures. This produced a demanding timetable (see Appendix D for term 1) designed, as Billett comments, for workers to *'perform functionally and effectively in their workplace role and develop further their potential through workplace experiences.'* (2006:34). This intentional curriculum was explicitly shaped by the headteacher with the issues of maintaining standards and the difficulties of employing a large number of NQTs in mind. Billett (2006) identifies the intentional, enacted and experienced curriculum as different facets structuring the affordances for learning within the workplace. The INSET programme at Peony Hill as an intentional curriculum was oriented to organizational effectiveness, and did not have career progression or development as a focus, particularly in this first term. The curriculum for developing *leaders* within the school seemed to be unspecified, and unplanned, emerging instead from the work tasks and demands, Billett's *'experienced'* curriculum. Here there were no explicit workplace learning activities designed for leadership; teachers took up the role of leader on appointment and were expected to be capable of doing the job.

In education, as I point out in chapter four, there are powerful government influences and the close examination of boundaries has been helpful in understanding how

these external forces become evident at the level of the school. The curricula for leadership learning in schools are set out in the NCSL's various leadership programmes, yet the ambivalent view of these programmes held by the headteacher and deputy (section 5.3), combined with the way that physical boundaries around the school tended to be closed, meant that the headteacher was at best ambivalent and times resistant to these centripetal influences. Although succession planning was a concern at the level of Government and academic debate, this organization was oriented to achieving continuity and survival in the short term rather than looking to the future. The '*pathways*' that Billett refers to, the '*track to be run, the course of learning*' (2006:35) from the easier tasks to the more complex and hard to learn, were focussed on the larger goals of the organization rather than progression to leadership roles within the organization.

The way that physical boundaries were constructed by the headteacher, acting to protect the school and its new staff, supports Southworth's view (2003) that school leadership in England is '*preoccupied*' with organizational power relations and that this sustains the domination of individual leaders within 'their' schools. Southworth goes on to illustrate how the combination of decentralized accountabilities for finance, management and standards in tension with centralized curriculum, testing and inspection, result in very high levels of accountability at the local level for headteachers. This accountability at the individual headteacher and school level tended to close boundaries as a protective measure around the school in this case. The '*pathways*' to leadership made available were at Beth's discretion, and the issue of leadership development was almost invisible in relation to other priorities for the school.

This finding supports the work by Rhodes and Brundrett (2006) who looked at development of leadership talent in urban primary schools. They found that the '*journey of transition*' to leadership resides in the '*hands of [their] headteachers on a*



*day-to-day basis*' (2006:269). Some of the barriers to leadership talent development that were identified ( time, funding, workload, fear of leaving the classroom, lack of ambition and staff resistance) were also mentioned by the curriculum leaders in Peony Hill school, in particular time and workload. The types of activities that were deemed effective as leadership development activities by the headteachers in Rhodes and Brundrett's study included accountability and project work, workshadowing and networking. Whilst project work and accountability featured for the Peony Hill leaders there were limited opportunities for networking and no opportunities for workshadowing. Feedback was also mentioned by the headteachers in Rhodes and Brundrett's study, but there were concerns from one headteacher that '*leadership development activities might take teachers away from essential work with children.*' (2006:281). This concern was echoed by Beth and the curriculum leaders at Peony Hill School. Rhodes and Brundrett comment that this suggests that there is a question about '*the will or the wherewithal to create individual school cultures supportive of leadership development*' (2006:281). At Peony Hill School the priorities of the school (integration of the NQTs; consistency in assessment across the school; Improving ICT capability of the staff), and the tendency to closure of physical boundaries to facilitate the achievement of these priorities, meant that a long term view of leadership development did not seem to be on the agenda. The workplace curriculum for leadership was limited to those already in a leadership role, and the 'intentional' nature of any planned curriculum was oriented to the school goals rather than leadership development goals.

Despite this, engagement with a variety of leadership programmes offered by the NCSL was taking place on an individual level emerging from personal initiatives by Nicola and Ingrid which seemed to place the idea of career development as outside the workplace. This seemed to have particular implications for the NCSL's view of learning, that "*most leadership learning takes place in school, while doing the job, through engaging actively in leadership practice. The College's role is to support,*

*extend and enrich this leadership development through activities, reflection and collaborative working.*' (NCSL 2004:1). Learners were, indeed, actively engaging in practice, but the engagement with NCSL programmes occurred individually and outside the workplace. There were no specific activities designed to support this learning within the workplace, and as I go on to illustrate in chapter 6, very few opportunities for collaboration. In both individual conversations and group discussions one reason repeatedly given for this marginalization of opportunities specifically oriented towards leadership development was a lack of time during the school day.

## **5.2 Directed time – biographical time**

The agenda for the first three INSET days (document 1) also indicates the concern with time. Time may be considered as a symbolic feature of interaction, but here it operated as an influence and marker of social action in a very physical way. Time boundaries were connected to spatial, social and communication issues and had a strong influence on the range of possibilities for social action available to individuals throughout the study. Time operated as a closed, almost physical, boundary in the sense that there was little or no negotiation possible in terms of changing the preset structures and routines of the school. Time directed much of the physical placement of the person in the school building and had a major impact on the social interactions that were possible.

School time has particular rhythms that are present concurrently, yet enacted and invoked differently. The shape of the school year, its start in September and finish in July, framed the research study offering a 'natural' start and finish point, yet there is nothing natural about it. These start and finish times are the product of the agricultural history of England and the relationship schools have with the church calendar. Here Bakhtin's (1981) '*grand time*' of history continues to make its mark -

the old powers of nobility and church evident in the difficulty of changing this yearly routine (Grace 1995).

Within the school year the struggle between government policy makers and the resistant forces of the unions has resulted in the contestation of use of teachers time to such an extent that the '*Teachers' workload and working time policy*' (NUT 2006) explains, to the hour, how an individual teacher's time over the year can be used under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document issued by the government. Beth had itemized these requirements against activities in the school (Appendix E). The 1265 required hours for teachers are defined to the level of 1/4 hour per day to cover break times, and 1/2 hours per day for registering children. The designation of PPA (preparation, planning and assessment) time and INSET time amount to 120 hours each year for the basic level teacher. Hours for teachers with additional responsibilities, Fast Track teachers and managers, including headteachers, are also counted and designated- but to a lesser extent as one rises up the hierarchy of those responsible for the school.

This time has a name - '*directed time*' and the headteacher has the power to direct teachers in the school on every one of the 195 specified days to undertake duties '*at such times and in such places as specified*' (NUT 2006:12). Leadership and management time for the leadership group has no minimum specification, but is at the discretion of the headteacher (and is in addition to PPA time). Headteachers are expected to be given '*dedicated headship time*' (ibid:18) by their governing bodies to ensure that they can lead and manage their school. These concerns with time and its use acted as real boundaries shaping the way that both formal learning opportunities were provided, and the way that discussion opportunities where informal learning could be said to occur could take place.

An important consequence resulting from the tendency to close boundaries, and the pressure on time, was that curriculum leaders had only one timetabled hour of leadership and management time per week. This was specifically for the SMT meeting, and no further management time was available. This meant that the three CLs had a full teaching timetable with only their PPA time available for both their teaching and their leadership tasks and, as the timetable for INSET over the first term shows, only two afternoons following the school day (Thursday and Friday) when they were not in meetings. Ingrid, as deputy head, had slightly more hours free from classroom commitments, but was also acting as NQT and Fast Track mentor and Maths co-ordinator for the whole school. Beth did not have a teaching timetable, but during staff absences would cover classes in preference to getting in a supply teacher. This was because she felt that a supply teacher would not understand the ethos of the school (a view that was endorsed by Nicola at the end of the year). At one point, when there was a lot of staff sickness, Beth was teaching as much as 11 hours a week, SMT meetings were cancelled and other work was left.

This lack of time to get together formally as a leadership group meant that the sessions were always under pressure – the deadline of 3.15pm for the meeting end when the leaders went straight to whole school INSET, which they were often leading, placed immense pressure on the time available within the meeting to cover the issues. It severely truncated time for discussion, and the SMT meeting had a pattern of quick decisions and instruction giving. The rigidity of the timetable also had a direct impact on the physical space available for curriculum leaders or the whole management group to meet and talk together. The tightly packed teaching timetable meant that the curriculum leaders were rarely free at the same time, and consequently they had little opportunity to discuss immediate or longer term issues. Beth organized one meeting outside the school during the autumn term, to discuss a specific issue (difficulties with spelling), but this was not repeated during the year.

The rigidity of this genre of *directed time* with its chronotope of school day, week and year seemed to be closely related to the genre of organizational effectiveness and achievements driven by government targets. Discussions looked forward to this timeframe of week, term, school year and within that the targets for SATS, that year's performance output, to be known in July. From the very first INSET day, 4<sup>th</sup> September, '*Target Children*' were identified for attention to improve borderline SATS results in English, Maths and Science. Any extra time gained was also vulnerable to this pressure of time and targets. Despite the appointment of an additional CL in April 07 (following research feedback and group discussions about this time issue), Jayne commented later in the year that,

**Having an extra CL helped, but 2 of the 3 hours that she had gained were used up by taking the 'SATS' booster class at the moment. This was for 5 weeks, and Jayne thought that they should have started this work 'ages ago'. The SMT group had discussed this problem back in the autumn, but no specific action had resulted.**

(Fieldnotes; Twilight Inset session – informal conversation 2.05.07)

There were other chronotopes within the organization, in particular these different chronotopes were evident in the way that career development was discussed and played out within the leadership team.

### **5.2.1 Biographical time and intentional career trajectories.**

Recounting one's own individual career biography lends itself to a certain narrative, a linear story that makes sense of the past (section 3.31 ) and ends by logically justifying the present. Yet it was apparent that there was more than this; the language used by the participants was of a particular trajectory for the career path to headship and seniority within the teaching profession and was heavily influenced by tradition and the policy agenda implemented by the NCSL. As I discuss in chapter 4 these forces are centripetal in character, normalizing both a pathway to leadership and to some extent the timescale anticipated to achieve this. However differences in

the way that this career trajectory was framed were apparent. The overview of the current roles, career aims and the anticipated timescale to achieve this for each of the interviewees can be seen in Table 5 on page 139. These plans were described in response to the career intentions question in the interviews.

The career plans for the two newest curriculum leaders Nicola, the Fast Track candidate, and Jayne, the mature entrant to the profession were particularly interesting in terms of their different relationship between time and learning. These two CLs had similar aims in the short term, but very different senses of time for their career trajectories, and different ideas about possibilities for the longer term. Focussing on career planning and time has a relationship with the ways in which the participants described their career biography to date, and it seemed in these two cases that the different biographies implied differences in both how the individuals might learn and what they might perceive as spaces to learn.

### **5.2.2 Nicola – a rising star: the direct path to headship.**

Nicola had been accepted as a Fast Track (to leadership) candidate in the last year of her degree programme (which she had begun straight from school), and her progress since then seemed to be shaped by both her own perceptions of the programme and Beth's perceptions of Nicola as a Fast Track candidate. Nicola had completed her NQT year at Peony Hill and had become CL for year 6 in this year, the second year of her teaching career. Here she talks about the timescale of the programme.

<i>“Nicola</i>	<i>I was Fast Tracked before I knew which university I was doing my PGCE at and then you're out on the PGCE year where you had extra sessions and most weeks twilight sessions Fast Tracking. That was it really, and I have got a mentor who stays in Derbyshire, we email occasionally and it's fine.</i>
<i>Ann</i>	<i>what in the last year?</i>

*Nicola*                    *yeah.*

*Ann*                        *not this year then?*

*Nicola*                    *not this year, not yet. And last Easter I had to go to a 3 day conference in Nottingham and this Easter I am doing the same again.*

*Ann*                        *and do you, is the focus on that Fast Track more on leadership skills would you say? Because it is Fast Track for leadership isn't it?*

*Nicola*                    *well or AST. But yeah I mean they are pushing people to go for the NPQH and helping people out with applying for that. That seems to be the big focus. They have now mapped their log book and learning journals so that their criteria match the NPQH so that you, you're not preparing evidence for Fast Track and then NPQH so there is links and a lot more closely now.*

*Ann*                        *how long does it last for, was it 2 years?*

*Nicola*                    *5.*

*Ann*                        *5 years. Erm, so by the end of 5 years you will probably be a head teacher then, well you could be if you wanted to.*

*Nicola*                    *well the aim of the program is by the 5th year you will either be an Advanced Skills Teacher or an assistant head or a deputy head. If you are one of those sooner you come off the scheme because that's the job done."*

(Nicola, Interview 1 sections 59 – 69)

At the end of the year, in a recorded follow up interview Nicola discussed her immediate goals. She explained why she had elected to move to be year 3 leader despite Beth's initial reluctance (to gain experience of the other end of the age range in Key Stage 2) and that she had considered moving to another school in order to gain this experience. After her planned year as CL for year 3 she intended to apply for deputy posts in order to achieve her five year Fast Track plan by the Autumn of 2008. Nicola was clear that the deputy posts that she would be applying for would be in a nearby town and not within this school. She describes herself as focussed and indicated that others also describe her in this way, and this was born out by the

comments of Beth. Nicola, however, did not underestimate the difficulty of achieving her goals within the five years and perceptions of her career trajectory as unusual. She contrasts her own, and the Fast Track, view of readiness for leadership with a more traditional view, which may be held by other headteachers, on whom she is dependent for promotion.

- “Nicola           so yeah, the aim would be to look then for deputy headship for next year [mmm] depends on the size of the school and it depends on the head I think. If a head is very, um, is very open minded and can see that I’ve crammed a lot in to three years of teaching in terms of whole school projects I think I’d be OK, but if it was a head that was adamant that you couldn’t be a deputy unless you taught for ten years, I would obviously struggle.*
- Ann               yes, some people have got a very linear view on how people become deputy headteachers, others haven’t [couple of sentences omitted...]*
- Nicola           I don’t know, I mean that would be my aim. I’ve asked if I can do more with the writing from the whole school perspective next year. So, like Ingrid M did a numeracy project as deputy head, as part of her NPQH, something similar with writing, so you observe all the teachers, initially, survey the children what do they like what don’t they like, how do we change it, implement the changes, and then sort of work with teachers and reanalyse it all at the end of the year. So I think something like that would stand me in good stead for a deputy headship, that is looking at it from a whole school perspective, something that is clearly wrong with the school and trying to make it better.”*

(Nicola interview 2 sections 90 - 94)

Leadership here is clearly linked to whole school projects and Nicola uses Ingrid’ successful career route through achievement of NPQH via the whole school project as a very clear role model. In this discussion elements are drawn from the wider



heteroglossia of discourses available about school leadership and the pathway to this. The aspects selected seemed to be centripetal in character and influenced by the modernizing genres of political commentary and the NCSL leadership development agenda, which prioritize rapid progression to leadership, youthfulness of leaders and position alternative views of career development as reactionary. For example, the idea of the *'five year'* plan was resonant in both the Fast Track structure and in Nicola's own goals. This time frame was presented as a faster, speedier trajectory superimposed on the more traditional, longer term routes to leadership, via ten years teaching and numbers of years in each post – moving across the each of the year groups in the school and gaining a variety of teaching experiences. The *'whole school project'* was also a key way of engaging with leadership beyond the (teaching) classroom. The ability to assess the whole school and other teachers for their teaching practice seemed to be a key element of 'readiness' and demonstration of ability to lead. This clearly extended the role of evaluation beyond teaching in the year group and even managing the year group team. Nicola seems to have already evaluated writing as 'something clearly wrong' with the school (but this statement was not born out by the school SATS results), she is perhaps looking for a problem in order to demonstrate her problem solving abilities and leadership. Here Nicola seems to be intending to expand her area for leadership performance space and begins setting the boundaries around the 'whole school', which in this iteration meant all staff and children rather than also including parents and Governors. Through aiming to take on a *'whole school project'* she is setting her own boundaries and creating an arena within which she can lead. The focus of Nicola's career plan was firmly within the hierarchy of school leadership and she had specifically excluded undertaking further study at Masters or PhD level in order to achieve this.

### 5.2.3 Jayne – the philosophical traveller.

Whilst Jayne also used the idea of the 'five year plan' her orientation to time and progression was very different to Nicola. Jayne had entered teaching as a mature student at 25 years old having completed a Masters in International Studies and having worked in a variety of jobs. She completed her teaching qualification through the In-School training scheme and had worked at another school prior to moving to Peony Hill this year. This would be her third year of teaching and her first year as CL and year 4 leader. Jayne had quite different ideas about the timescale that would lead to deputyship and she was more tentative about this, but she did have deputyship in mind as a probable goal in her teaching career.

*“Jayne     Erm, I would like to be a deputy eventually. Whether ever being a head, I think the role is so complex now, that you have finance erm, everything, I think that would be quite a way off, I don't think I would want to do that quickly at all. I would like to enjoy every stage. I am quite early on in my career, you need at least, well you don't have to, but I would not be comfortable going into a deputy role or anything more than this without 6 years at least. And experience in another school as well. I think it is important to have lots of different systems and ideas, but I have had experience of 3 schools now so,*

*Ann        and you would see that you would want to move into you know, around at maybe a different level in other schools?*

*Jayne     erm, maybe, I think it would be quite hard to become a deputy in a school where you have worked your way up, I think it would be better to go in, in a new school, in that role as deputy.*

*Ann        why? Would it be hard to do that?*

*Jayne     erm, I think erm, a lot of people might remember you as your old role and I think it is probably, and it is also, a lot of those other ideas are already in place, the idea is to take the good practice and to put it in another school that needs it I think*

*Ann        so you definitely see yourself as, see yourself as staying in this school though? I mean quite clearly your saying, your thinking your career in terms of school roles.*

- Jayne     *yes, in education definitely. I would like to perhaps, I don't know it is very difficult to know what is out there until you start tapping in. but through this PSHE certificate the lady who runs it says she is on the look out for people to help her run work shops and ideas like that, and I like the idea of erm, you know sort of the training that you can go into other schools and give (( )) I am quite interested in doing that. As well and erm,*
- Ann        *yes*
- Jayne     *maybe lecturing, education, way, way, way on. Way, way on. But that would be nice. What I would like to teach the students you know,*
- Ann        *yes, I know (( )) its just that some people have a view about whether they might want to go in a different direction later or not but, yes it is interesting isn't it to think about what possibilities.*
- Jayne     *the policy side of it as well, I am very interested in that and I always love listening to debates on education on the radio and thinks like that. That always you know, I will have my ears pricked up for things like that. So that is something that I am very interested in as well. Perhaps QCA*  
               *[ section omitted on MA already achieved and financing of further MA courses]*
- Ann        *so you're open minded then on these issues to do with where you might go, but not right now because you're busy.*
- Jayne     *I have a 5 year plan. This is year 4 of my 5 year plan, which was to find a lovely school, erm, one that you know, challenged me and that I could learn a lot in, and erm, you know so,*
- Ann        *so you have succeeded in your 5 year plan.*
- Jayne     *yes, well quite well. When I looked at, I was looking at GTP's that was my idea, to try and find somewhere where I could really make a difference. So yeah, it is about thinking about the next 5 years now.*
- Ann        *so you are sort of just getting round to thinking about that, you haven't started thinking about that?*
- Jayne     *erm, a little bit, it overlaps"*

(Jayne interview sections 101 to 121)

The hesitancy, qualifications and explorations of options other than the mainstream career pathway to deputy and headship show that a career in education for Jayne is more than headship or school leadership. She includes the training of others and policy within her discussion and takes a broader view of the possibilities available to

her. Her connection with external views through her contact with the PHSE course leader, broader working life history and media debates (mentioned on her concept map) contrasts with Nicola's external contact, a mentor as part of the Fast Track programme, fully within the leadership pathways framework for NCSL. Jayne's view of time and experience also has different quality than the five year plan for Nicola. This five year time frame does exist for Jayne, and is mentioned, but she anticipates that her progression will take longer, she wants to savour each stage of the journey, and that journey explicitly includes moving from one environment to another to gather experience. This experience specifically includes stepping across the boundaries established for this school and includes the evaluation of other school settings.

At the end of the year Jayne remained in post and was allocated Year 4 leadership for a second time. It was unclear whether she had chosen this or whether this was the only option presented to her by Beth, in view of the other changes that Beth had to make due to staff movements. Jayne had completed the PHSE training and agreed to take up the 'Leadership Pathways' training from the NCSL along with Nicola and the newly appointed CL replacing Frances. Whilst taking up the affordances for training now offered to her by the school, Jayne was clear that these were not the only options for someone in education and in taking up this opportunity she did not necessarily have the end goal of headship in mind.

#### **5.2.4 Ingrid - successfully promoted (journey's end)**

Ingrid had also operated within what could be considered to be a 'five year' framework. In her case she had achieved her explicit goal of becoming a deputy head before she was 30 (within 10 years from graduation) and had, after five years as a deputy, achieved headship. Achieving the goal of headship presented problems though

*Ingrid* but my worry is OK be a headteacher, then what. I can't be a headteacher for the next 32 years

*Ann* no

*Ingrid* where is there left for me to go? you see I work to a career path"

(Ingrid interview sections 435 – 437)

On asking what Ingrid's career path might be on achieving headship she mentioned LA consultancy, but the outcome of the current redefinition of the consultancy role to 'School Improvement Partners' was unclear and this seemed unsatisfactory to her. Ingrid had no answer at present to this dilemma. The goal of headship seemed to complete this particular journey and it was too soon for Ingrid to contemplate where she might go next.

In some ways Ingrid had taken a similar view of movement to Jayne. She suggested that she had moved from the school where she had started as an NQT to become deputy at this school specifically in order to gain a wider experience. She repeatedly contrasted the approach taken by her previous school with practices at this school, often evaluating her original school as more satisfying to work in. She made these comments not only in her interview, but as a matter of course to the headteacher, causing Beth to comment about her that '*she never really left*' (Beth July 2006 interview notes). It was no surprise to Beth that the headship that Ingrid obtained was back at her original school. Ingrid stated that she would be taking a lot of experience back with her to the school as its new headteacher and specifically suggested that she would have a more open approach to leadership.

Although movement to gain experience was a stated aim for Ingrid, the movement between organizations here was qualitatively different to that of Jayne. Ingrid viewed two schools as sufficient, and instrumental in gaining headship rather than developing her experience *per se*. She seemed to have adopted an evaluative stance that dichotomized the two schools in terms of context, pupil profile and

leadership practices (rural town affluent and city poor; leadership from the head rather than delegated). She described the schools as being at the two extreme ends of a range and had made her decision about where she wanted to be by choosing the school for headship. She positioned herself as being able to make more of a difference for children at the school where she was to become headteacher. It was interesting that Ingrid had no time frame for the next phase of her career. Positioning herself on the threshold of headship it was almost as if she was stepping into the unknown, the '*grand time*' of headship.

### 5.2.5 'Grand time'

The interviews and discussions with all the participants took place against a backdrop of what Bakhtin calls '*grand time*'. This is the enduring influence of history and tradition, both of this particular school and of the nature of headship and leadership in English society. Grace (1995) gets close to this when he discusses the enduring image of the headteacher (from Victorian times) and the way that headteachers today are constrained, shaped, in contrast with this image. Beth showed a particular awareness of her place in the long tradition of headteachers at Peony Hill School, which had been operating in the town from at least the 1850's. The school community still took part in annual town traditions dating back to the last century. She expressed a desire to '*make her mark*' and contrasted her achievements with the previous headteacher (who had been head for twelve years) and the way that she had found the school in both physical terms and in terms of unsatisfactory staff practices. Whilst she clearly wanted to leave her mark on the ethos of the school (children enjoying schooling) there were also more physical ways that she had made her mark; the improvements and extensions to the school buildings and in the records of achievements of the school measured by Ofsted and SATS results that were recorded nationally and locally in the wider world of school records.

In Bakhtin's sense of grand time the possibilities for the role of the headteacher had changed in small respects (age, gender), but not in essence from the iconic and authoritarian headteacher of the past. This view of the headteacher was a residual stereotype held by the parents of the children and the staff through their own experiences of school and by Beth herself. The headteacher remained, in practice, the ultimate authority for children, teachers and in the eyes of parents. Despite strenuous efforts by national policymakers to distribute power and decision making in schools, the view of the headteacher as the sole and final authority was reinforced by the long trail of history in terms of this role and stereotype. Teachers and parents all drew on the enduring cultural genres that represented headteachers and primary schools in a particular way. Ingrid alluded to this in her comments about the difficulty she had in seeing herself as a headteacher who should be of '*a certain age*' (Ingrid interview) whilst at the same time as applying for posts. Nicola's assessment of the view of a headteacher's possible reaction to her career trajectory also invoked this image.

This raises a question here about the space available to recreate and adapt these images of the headteacher role for Beth and others becoming headteachers. The construction of physical and social boundaries by Beth, and the acceptance or challenges to these boundaries by other group members, were important in reinforcing or mediating the way that the '*grand time*' image of the headteacher impacted on the current playing of the headteacher role. Beth wanted to exert control and consistency within the school as a way of ensuring her own view of high standards. The cost of this was an increase in staff turnover (two NQTs and two further staff left at the end of this year). The desire to make a mark in grand time, reified in SATS scores and Ofsted comments overrode longer term staff development or leadership activities that were not directly related to this goal.

### 5.3 Exposure to the heterglossia of leadership

Whilst the headteacher and other curriculum leaders were clearly aware of the leadership programme for schools this was sidelined, and conceptualized as an individual activity, rather than embraced and actively endorsed by the headteacher. Both Ingrid and Nicola had embarked upon their NCSL programmes before joining the school. This framing had an impact on the ways that the other curriculum leaders could draw down ideas about leadership from the heterglossia and shape an intended curriculum for leadership within the workplace. For example, the headteacher and her deputy both had negative views of the NPQH that Ingrid had completed the previous summer. They felt so strongly about this that the Governors had commented at the full meeting of 2nd March 2006.

**The deputy Headteacher, [name deleted], had completed the written element of the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers. It was felt that much of the work had been unnecessarily stressful and nonsensical. (Extract from Gov. minutes : fieldnotes)**

Ingrid herself had mixed views, in her interview she expanded on her view of the National Professional Qualification for Headship

- Ingrid      NPQH*
- Ann          did you learn anything, you said once to me you didn't learn anything*
- Ingrid      I didn't learn anything, I just realized that I was doing half the stuff anyway and didn't realize it, but it just actually identified what I was doing. Like there were seven leadership goals or something, and I looked at them and thought yeah I'm doing all them, but I just do it by knowing my people, cos that, so I didn't learn that I just knew there were names for it now, does that make sense*
- Ann          yes it does, so did you learn that you, was it something about having more confidence because it sort of like gave a stamp of satisfaction to what you're already doing*
- Ingrid      mmmmm, it's weird isn't it*
- Ann          I mean what do you think now you've finished it, I mean you said to me that you didn't learn many skills when you did it,*



*Ingrid I didn't, but I learned how to talk, and chat, I never put my hand up, I never introduce speakers because I don't like putting that sort of (( )) I like to keep quiet. In staff meetings I do that, I keep quiet, I'm observing, I'm just absorbing everything and everyone, I can tell you so much*

*Ann but you do speak in staff meetings*

*Ingrid only when I feel really compelled, or there's no-one else speaking it, I don't really*  
*not as vocal as some people*

*Ann no, I think there are interestingly*

*Ingrid very interesting who speaks, like a whole new, a discovery, I've got my own little ideas*

*Ann yes, yes, what about the language though, you said that there was something about language there, learning the language of what*

*Ingrid oh yeah, it's like, I lead in seven styles but I don't give them seven proper names, but there are these names, and I did write it all down, and I just found it amusing, but I did all of them, but I just didn't call them whatever, I can't even remember what the names were*

(Ingrid interview transcript – sections 402 - 415)

Whilst the language of leadership had been identified by Ingrid she no longer used this within the school, or in describing her role as deputy leader. When asked about her leadership at a later point she said “*I lead from the middle, the front and behind*” (Fieldnotes 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007). This comment ironically evaluated the NCSL’s leadership programmes, specifically referencing the ‘Leading from the Middle’ programme, as offering numerous possibilities but ultimately leaving the individual to find their own way of leading.

In a similar way Beth had been on a headteachers’ course (LPSH), and had thought that the beginning was good, in particular the first residential, but on returning to school the demands of school pushed this to the background.

*“ Beth yeah. I've actually got the stuff out to show you, 'cos I thought I must look at this before Ann comes um and it's. (.) because it makes you realize, you actually have time to reflect, for the first time ever, ever, ever, ever,*

*people were talking about leadership styles , and management, and the sort of person you are, and I know from that that I need approval, and you don't get that as a head.*

*Ann unless you've got a very very nice chair of governors very often*

*Beth mm, so you don't have it, um, and from that, that actually made quite a lot of difference to how I went about things, because I consciously think well why am I doing this, this was actually so that other people will think it's OK, and I've been able to divorce myself from it. I don't always do it, and I still know when, I can get home and think well I did that because I wanted people to think*

*Ann it was a good thing*

*Beth it was a good thing, or 'Beth's thought about us' and actually people don't always do that anyway, so that was really good because it talked about, um, iceberg problems and how we ((delay)) and then how that had impact on new management and new leadership ((?)) um, and that was really, really useful and then the last couple of days sort of fizzled out because actually what you needed to be doing was going over and reinforcing that, and such a lot of information*

*Ann you mean they went on further and there was too much*

*Beth yeah, and yes, and it didn't quite work because you were supposed to come back into school and do things, but of course once you're back in school you're totally immersed in it all again, and actually to go back and really revisit those, really really talk about them again, um, and the group I was with, um, finished up falling apart really 'cos somebody got divorced, and somebody left teaching, you know as it does, until really, it was a shame, because it was one of the best management things I've ever, ever been on, well actually, it was the crux of it all."*

*(Beth interview, 153 – 160)*

Here Beth uses the language of reflection and the language of management (iceberg problems) but what she seems to have drawn most from the course was the realization that she needed the approval of others for her actions as a leader. It was interesting that she refuted my suggestion that she might receive this support as a leader from her Chair of Governors, categorically stating 'so you don't have it' (approval). The course was clearly separate from school life, in the return to being 'totally immersed in it all again,' and it seemed that it was increasingly disconnected

from school life as the support group failed and the pressures of school life took over once more. This was the only time that Beth had attended a course of any length in her career as a headteacher so perhaps it was not surprising that she considered it the 'crux' of her own learning about leadership.

As headteacher Beth endorsed the Fast Track programme that Nicola was undertaking,

*Beth        'I think what Nicola's doing is excellent,*

*Ann        mm the Fast Track*

*Beth        Nicola's so focussed on, on the management, the (()) that makes a big difference, I mean I think that that's brilliant, that's the way forward*

*Ann        yes, she was talking about looking forward to the one she's going to at Easter, when she's there for her next big chunk of stuff, yes*

*Beth        I think the government's got it right with that. If you get the quality'*

(Beth interview 168 – 171)

and she saw this as the way forward, as long as the quality of the applicants was high. Nicola she assessed as

*"bright, she's very good, thinks ahead and that's great, and I think that that's what its all about now, and I think its a shame really because I think so many of us came in and we were very good at what we did in the classroom, and we then got this."*

(Beth interview 173)

Here Beth clearly distinguishes between teaching and management skills and yet she had been unable to release Nicola during term time to attend a FastTrack training programme. She also implies a disconnection between the teaching skills that she enjoyed and indicates a rather negative evaluation of her current role.

The interview continued with Beth talking about the dissatisfaction that she had experienced with Local Authority programmes and the middle management course that some staff had undertaken with the LA. She had a clear ranking of sources for information and prioritised NAHT and union advice.

*'Beth so, I know to lead by um union advice, that's the other thing I've learnt, that's the big one, where you get the best advice'*  
(Beth interview section 340)

This had led her to look at alternatives to LA programmes for development and she cited my involvement with the school, asking questions and *'making people think'* (Beth 189) and later in the year her invitation to a private consultant to make a presentation at INSET in May was a further example of this.

Whilst Beth was extremely cautious about the range of external courses on offer for leadership she saw her own role as one of developing other leaders within the school.

*'Beth OK, but I think that perhaps I didn't say there's something about coaching as well, as a leader that's one of these things that you should be doing all the time, working with people, coaching people talking about working together what we can do with someone without telling them what to do next.'*  
(Beth interview section 193)

Again, the language of NCSL development for leaders was apparent here in the use of coaching and talking as ways that others would learn to lead, and the responsibility of the headteacher to carry out this task.

Helping others learn to lead was clearly placed within the school by Beth and the concept mapping activity that took place during the interviews reiterated this view. The five participants were asked to think about how they learned to lead more broadly, and of 76 items generated through the mapping process 22 referred to learning that could be categorized as 'outside' the school. Most of these items were unambiguous (working with other headteachers; Listening to debates on education on radio 4 ) but three referred to process that could occur both outside and inside the school (reflecting on leadership I have experienced, good and bad; role models;

talking to Nicola on the way home, sharing ideas). The majority of items clearly perceived learning as taking place within the workplace and included items in each of the range of genres of learning referred to in the previous chapter. (Learning from experience = 19; Talk with others and texts = 26; Observation and modelling = 9) The way that learning for leadership that took place was located as primarily within the organization by each of these leaders (including Nicola the Fast Track candidate) even though there was no explicit curriculum or plan for leadership development.

So, in view of my comments earlier about the planned curriculum for the school staff (through INSET) reflecting the organizational targets and objectives, what were the activities that could be said to contribute to an unplanned curriculum for leadership development in the workplace? There seemed a few areas of work that would facilitate this type of development:

- Direct instructions from Beth at the Curriculum Leaders' meeting and to individuals via individual conversations and emails
- The Curriculum Leaders' meetings themselves
- The activities of leading a year team and dealing with a staff group
- The activities of dealing with NQTs (in a limited way as Beth and Ingrid were the main point of contact for NQTs)
- Taking on specific whole school projects – Artsmark, BLP, PHSE
- Managing the curriculum development teams
- Running INSET sessions and in a more limited way, planning INSET for the school.

These areas were not viewed as a workplace curriculum for leadership by Beth as they were not explicitly identified or sequenced as a learning programme (Billett 2006). The activities were shaped by the rhythm of the school year and many of these were concentrated around the first few weeks, immediately on appointment

and take up of the role of leader for the three curriculum leaders. This suggests that there was little room for '*positioning space*' and role integration between teacher and leader as discussed by Gronn and Lacey (2004 and Ashforth et al. (2000).

*'A positioning space is an occupational safety zone. The purpose of a positioning space, as part of anticipatory socialization, is to provide a temporary haven during possible role transition for the self-rehearsal of likely future roles. The particular virtue of positioning space is that it facilitates private or imagined leadership.'* (Gronn and Lacey 2004:406)

The nature of the school year and focus of INSET on whole school activities rather than a leadership curriculum meant that anticipatory activities which would offer a clear platform for such positioning were few and far between. One incident occurred after the successful appointment of the new curriculum leaders in July 2006. Beth had invited them all out together, and the three new curriculum leaders all attended an evening meal to discuss their roles and what would be needed for the September INSET (First three days) session. Nicola, Jayne and Frances all referred to this evening during later conversations and their interviews. They had found it useful and helpful but despite suggestions at various points by Beth this type of meeting had not been repeated. Significantly, this meeting had occurred outside the working day reflecting the impact of time boundaries on space for the intentional curriculum within the workplace. Within the routine working day there were very few opportunities for reflection or positioning, and the interviews for the research seemed to be the only space that was created as a positioning space to imagine and reflect on the very new experience of leadership for three of the CLs in this first term.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Learning for leadership was taking place within the school but, rather than anticipatory socialization, the ways that these curriculum leaders could learn to lead whilst already in leadership posts were constrained by both the organizational boundaries and the way that leadership was enacted within the school. The headteacher was concerned about the management of the school's organizational boundaries in response to the national and local pressures. As a consequence of this the intentional learning programme for staff operated at a generic organizational level, attending to the teaching and assessment of children and oriented to the national standards agenda. There was no explicit intentional curriculum for new or existing leaders to develop their leadership.

Any access to NCSL programmes for leadership development was achieved through individual career planning and boundary crossing, and this activity tended to be privatised by each individual, emerging from a personal space that was outside the school. This seemed connected to the headteacher and deputy head's ambivalence about NCSL programmes. Discussions about career paths showed that the boundary crossing between schools as part of the journey to leadership was quite limited. Of the five leaders, two had only worked in this school. Two of the remaining three had only worked at one other school. As a group, access to alternative practices of leadership was limited; only one of the leaders had worked outside a school.

Learning by leaders within the school seemed to be largely disconnected from the NCSL programmes and their expectation that leadership activities would be supported by reflection and collaborative working within the school. The genre of 'career' for leadership measured progression through the time frame of five school years; reprising the chronotope of school time and school years of experience in a particular post. The dominance of school time also had a significant impact on the

ways that leaders were, or were not, able to learn together and it was the enactment of leadership within the school that was to prove crucial in shaping the experience of individual learners.



## Chapter 6

### Space for learning - Performance and modelling

If the organization as a whole had developed boundaries in order to focus on consistency of delivery and assessment of children there were also internal boundaries that were apparent as the leadership group became established. These boundaries were both formally created through role definitions and socially apparent in the leadership group. Whilst the formal group of leaders had a clear threshold for membership, defined by national job descriptions for the teaching profession, this was mediated by the headteacher who had instigated a 'temporary' arrangement for one year for Nicola, Frances and Jayne. This was created for Frances, because she had only reluctantly filled the post to help out and for Nicola and Jayne in view of their very recent achievement of QTS. The restructuring of the workforce [September 2006] in terms of teaching and leadership responsibilities and the way that this might operate in the school was also new ground for the headteacher. Although the threshold of membership for the formal leadership group in the school was fixed from the point of view of other staff, Jayne, Frances and Nicola were aware of their temporary position. This position became firmer as the year progressed and the permanent appointments of two of the three CLs were confirmed [Frances choosing to return to mainstream teaching at the end of the year].

In terms of Hernes (2003) '*distinctiveness*' (section 2.21) the boundaries around the SMT as a group were complex. The limited time that was available for the group to meet as a formal group (the SMT meetings) restricted the time available for interaction as a group and for ideas to develop through discussion. Whilst CLs were visible as year leaders to their individual teams, as a group their meeting occurred whilst other staff were teaching – and consequently was not visible to others as an

activity. The additional meetings outside the school were rare, and again, not necessarily visible to other staff members. In terms of social bonds of the group was loyal on the surface to the headteacher, but expressed dissent about some of her opinions in their individual interviews. There were few direct challenges to the authority of the headteacher in the group and the way that the CLs managed to insert their issues into the meetings is discussed later in Chapter 7. In terms of the 'group voice' (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003) all the participants were careful not to dissent from group decisions when discussing and conveying the decisions reached during SMT meetings with other members of staff in their year group teams.

The distinctiveness and confidence in their leadership role was important for all the leaders in view of their performance of leadership. This is important as it is where learners can gain experience and reflect on practice in order to develop their own leadership and, in Bakhtin's terms, their own evaluative note. In performing leadership participants were expressing through actions their evaluative note, as any performance required the adoption of a position in relation to other leadership/leaders and policies within the school. Performance was also expressed through the repertoire of genres available for leadership within the organization.

The way that these interactions took place was therefore crucial, as it was here that there was potential for questioning and reflecting on leadership learning through dialogue, both with others and the 'internal' dialogue of individual reflection. Social, physical and time boundaries within the school impacted on the available performance spaces for leadership for individuals themselves and in terms of their observation or interaction with others performing as leaders. For example, the areas of visibility as a leader for Frances were when she lead within the SMT meetings, when she took whole school assembly, when she led two whole school INSET sessions on ICT and BLP and, informally, in conversation about years three and four

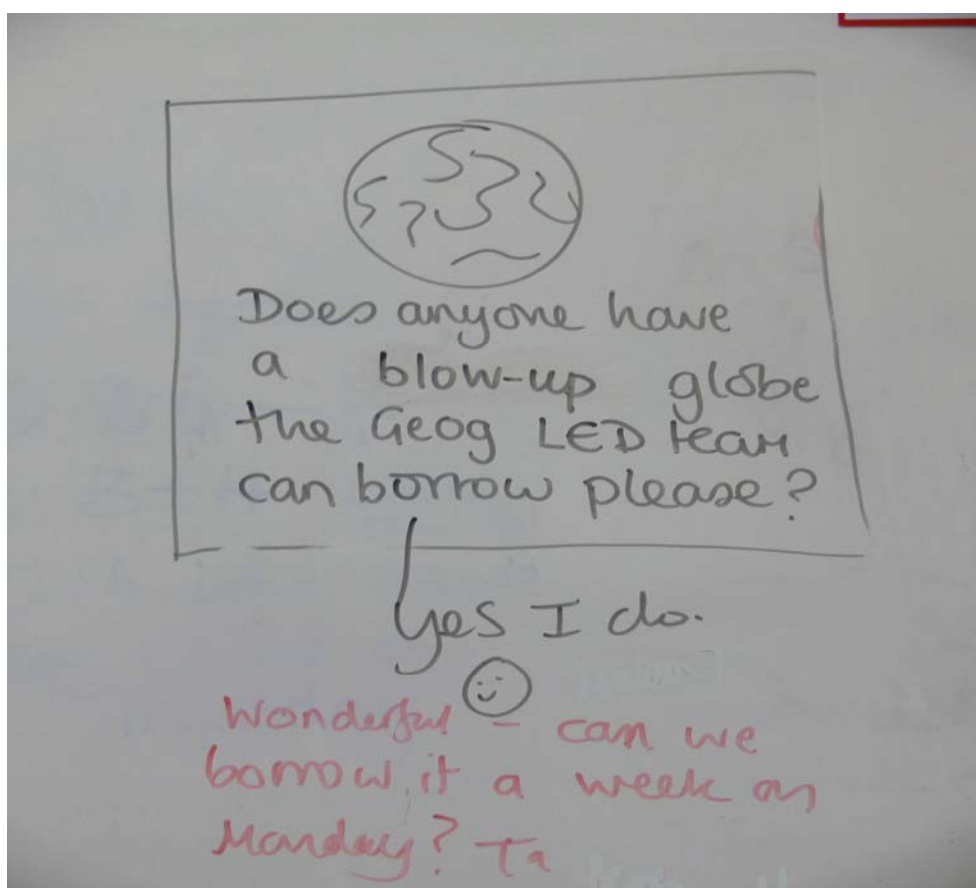
with Jayne. For the majority of the time she was leading her own year team or within her own classroom.

These performance spaces shaped learning both in terms of the *what* and *how* learning from experience took place. Performance space became a space to learn, and in this chapter I examine how communication spaces and observation spaces shaped how learning took place through modelling. I explore role models in relation to the participants' own learning and then I then move on to discuss leadership and 'being' a role model. I then discuss the way performance of leadership shaped the development of an evaluative note for the participants learning to lead at Peony Hill school with particular attention to the way that the authoritative voice of leadership was developed by the participants.

### **6.0.1 Communication Spaces**

As I have already identified the demands of the school timetable meant that time boundaries were identified by all of the participants in the study as important in constraining the ways that people in the school were able to communicate with each other. If teachers were on playground duty they would be unable to communicate with their year group colleagues during break times. Lunchtimes offered more opportunities for discussion, but not all staff might be present or agree to be part of the discussion. Some staff chose to have lunch and remain in their classrooms, others made a point of discussing topics other than school during the lunch hour. The culture of the school encouraged a style of communication where short exchanges dominated, quick answers and responses were the norm; because the staff were often not in the same physical place at the same time as others, message board and e-mail communications took the place of verbal contact. The IT technician estimated that there were over 50 e-mail communications a day per staff member, and more from some staff who 'groupmailed'. She had conducted an

internal survey and commented that '*most teaching staff are reporting that they use IT for more than 80% of their communication – and in preference to the phone*' (e-mail communication 20.06.07). The whiteboards in the staffroom were used to ask if others could help out with resources, or to post notices on about current plans. The two whiteboards had different functions, one being the official school events (times of duties, people expected into school, Beth's movements) or rearrangements of the school timetable for special days. The second was for any staff member to use and could be requests for lifts, notes about room use, resources or any other information or question. Replies were added on an ad hoc basis.



#### **Staffroom whiteboard**

This general style of communication did not offer a venue for a discussion about leadership, rather the tone was information sharing in terms of organizational resources and planned activities. This genre of communication could be said to be

institutional talk, and a form of what I later categorise as a type of '*utilitarian*' talk (discussed further in chapter 7) where the addressivity is general, the theme organizational/resource/planning issues, and the form (here e-mail, whiteboard) is designed to resolve the issue of a lack of face-to-face communication and the time frame is that of urgent resolution. As I commented in chapter 5, the one hour that the CLs met together each week and the demanding afterschool INSET programme meant that there were only rare opportunities for the group to meet together on an ad hoc basis.

Learning through discussion, conversations and talk were identified as ways that learning to lead took place, and the school leaders distinguished between different types of spaces available for discussion. In the map below [part of the composite 'I learn to lead' map] informal and formal spaces for discussion can be seen. These informal spaces can be seen to occupy spaces '*in-between*' (Solomon et al. 2006) and Jayne, in particular, articulated this in her interview.

*' Ann        whereabouts do you talk? (with other leaders)*

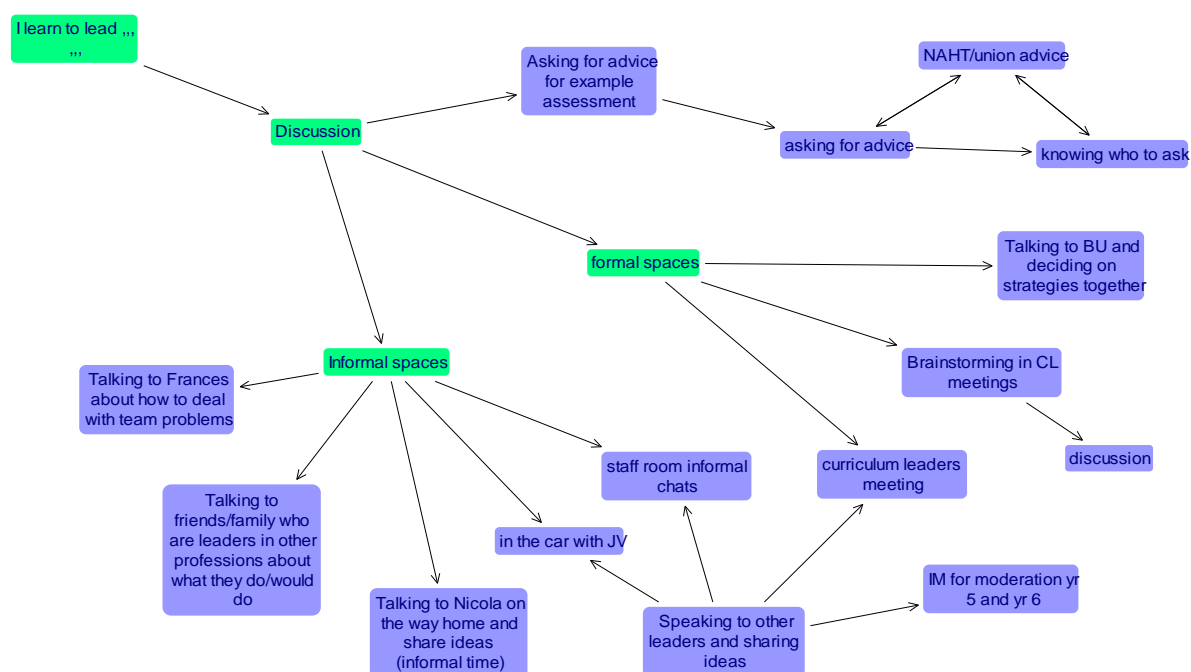
*Jayne        where do we talk? Informally, its always informally. In the mornings our coffee meeting, (with) Frances, (if) I need to check something because she was year 4 last year so she is a huge fountain of knowledge. Erm, in the corridors, tea breaks, after school.'*

*Ann        but is that mainly one to one then, or isn't it, I mean there is not really another venue you are saying for the five of you (other than SMT meeting time)?*

*Jayne        no, that's the only time we all meet as a five'*  
*(Jayne interview sections 146 - 149 )*

This type of exchange also seemed to confirm the functional nature of the talk and the idea of knowledge as a resource, Frances acting as a 'bank' from which information could be acquired. Jayne seemed to view this talk as a way that she could acquire knowledge (Sfard 1998) to meet her immediate needs to perform

adequately as leader of her year group, and the nature of much of this type of talk (with the exception of the shared car journeys) was fleeting and brief.



Green = Prime descriptor and researcher devised categories

Blue = discussion - participant generated concepts and linkages

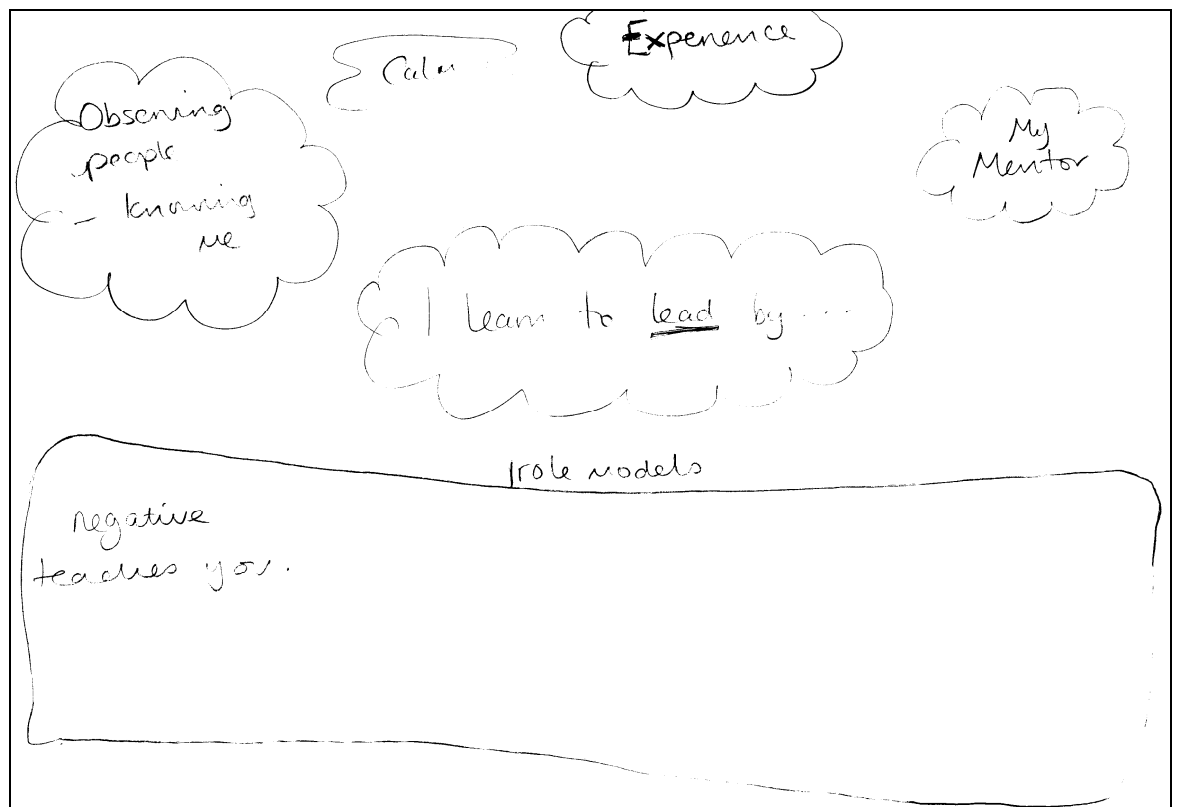
### Concept Map 1 - Learning to lead (composite/partial)

The map illustrates how informal and ‘in between’ spaces were identified as opportunities for discussion alongside the formal spaces of the CL meetings and individual sessions with the headteacher. These individual sessions with Beth were not categorized as ‘formal’ by the participants, Nicola mentions that she sees Beth *‘most days, sort of touching base on something, but it’s normally just a quick question – answer. It is hard to get time for everybody’* (Nicola interview 1 section 156). Although this type of interaction was similar to Jayne’s description of fleeting questions I categorized this as formal in my interpretation of discussion spaces,

despite its ad hoc nature. The authority and power of the headteacher was always in play during these moments and Beth's suggestions clearly directed the actions of others as a result of these conversations. Overall, it seemed that there were few, if any, routine spaces available for the leadership group to discuss leadership either as an organizational achievement or in terms of personal development for the members of the leadership team.

## **6.1 Observational Spaces – modelling**

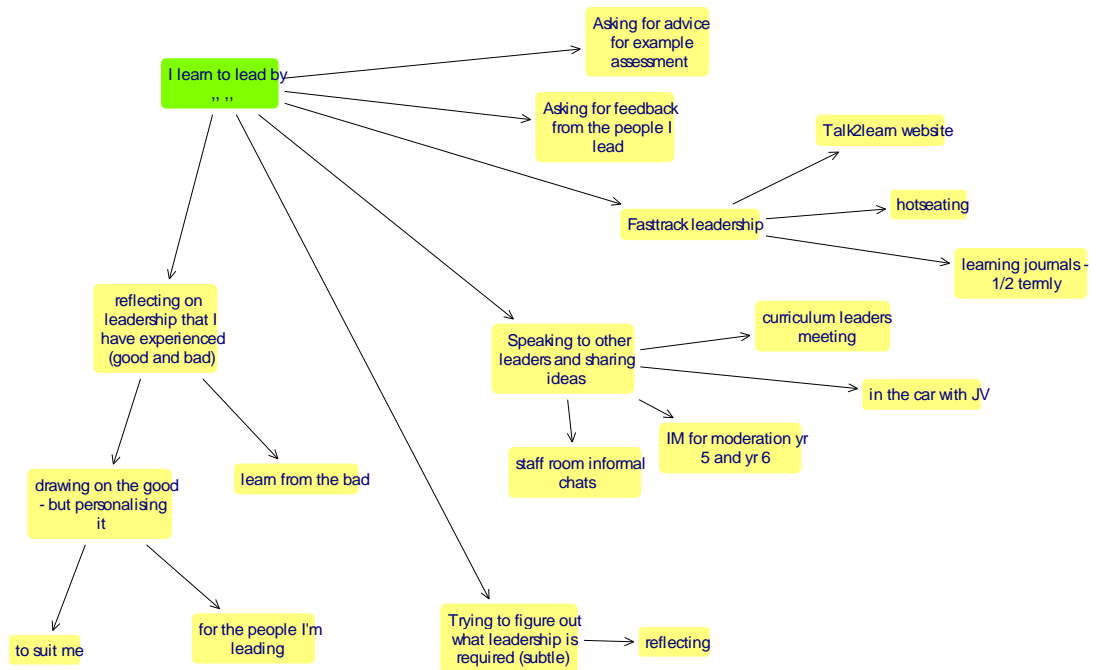
With limited opportunities for exploratory discussion explicitly about leadership how then was learning taking place within the school? It seemed that that learning from observation was a key element for the CLs and the deputy head here, and what they were observing was the behaviour of other leaders in this environment. The CLs explicitly mentioned role models in their concept maps, although with a more positive emphasis than the deputy head (Ingrid), and in combination with other ways of learning. In contrast, Ingrid placed considerable emphasis on negative role models that she had encountered both here and in her previous school and her map below indicates the emphasis that she gave to this, boxing out one third of the page. She emphasized this in as she talked, *'I've actually learned more in my whole teaching career by [...] the deputy head, who wasn't very nice, and I learnt far more about leading from her than I have learnt from anyone ever, because of how not to do it.'* (Ingrid interview section 155)



**Concept Map 2 – Ingrid 'I learn to lead' (original)**

For the three CLs learning from role models was not always explicitly identified as such on their learning maps, but '*informally observing*' (Frances) '*watching/observing other leaders*' (Jayne) and Nicola's location of '*personalizing*' and extracting from leadership that she had encountered for both (herself and in orientation towards her team members) were all comments that fit within the category of learning from observing people. Nicola's 'I learn to lead....' Map is illustrated below,





**Concept Map 3 – Nicola 'I learn to lead...' (uncoded)**

The headteacher also included '*watching and learning from others all the time*' within her learn to lead map, and subdivided this into 'good' and 'bad'. Although this sometimes had an overtone of surveillance in the watching of staff performance, in terms of her own learning she referred to her peers in her headteachers network.

*'Beth I work with them on the NQT programme, so that a group of us have been working together for a long time to virtually share ideas and bounce ideas around quite a lot there and that's really, really useful. (...)*

*Ann OK, you think that's a good learning*

*Beth so, um, for example, um, appointment of deputy - a group of us did that together, a group of three, I think I talked to you about that when I appointed Ingrid, and experience is a big one, um, you learnt, you learn to lead through reviewing and assessing, um, watching and learning from others all the time.'*

(Beth interview 318 – 320 )

She went on to indicate that there were 'good' and 'bad' aspects here in a similar way to Nicola. This evaluative component in the way that role models and

observational learning were conceptualized was to some extent problematic; on what basis was the observed behaviour evaluated as 'good' or 'bad', positive or negative? The idea of modelling and observing as learning was developed in each of the interviews and a more nuanced view of modelling emerged that related to both learning leadership and being a leader. Learning and performance of leadership were firmly intertwined around this issue of modelling.

### 6.1.1 Role models at Peony Hill

Learning through observation of others, including the explicit identification of role models, was important for all the participants. The grid below indicates the range of models mentioned by the participants and the way in which they related to an individual's learning using Gibson's (2004) dimensions, (discussed in section 4.21).

Participant	Role Models named	Dimensions of the role models
Beth	Other headteachers	Close, across, specific, positive
Ingrid	Previous deputy head Previous headteacher Various non-specific teachers here	Close, Up, negative Close, Up, positive Close, down, specific, positive
Nicola	Non-specific, names workplace and university generally	Close, specific, positive and negative (reframing the negative)
Frances	Beth, Ingrid	Close, up, specific, positive
Jayne	Beth Nicola Previous deputy  'a couple of teachers' (here)	Close, up, specific, positive Close, across, specific, positive Close, up, specific, positive and negative Close, down, specific, positive

**Table 6 - Gibson's (2004) Dimensions of Role Models (adapted).**

This observational learning contributed to the development of the '*evaluative note*' of the leaders through the selection of features of behaviour identified as worth taking

up, or not. Jayne explains how she selected specific aspects of people to use as positive role models, and the characteristics she valued,

*‘Jayne    ‘in the past it was a lady who is a deputy, actually my last, (school) erm, very professional, almost icy, but then really approachable when it is needed. And I think, I am not as icy as that, but I thought, yes, you have to be approachable, but not so approachable that you are always chatty like ‘la la la’, and then never get anything done. She knew that if you went to her it was something serious, and she would give you the time. So I think that is really important. And if you can see someone is distressed or upset, everything else stops, and you sort it out. So that’s a role model. Erm, Beth here, I really like the way she is with the children, I liked the way the school feels the first time I walked round it, I just thought, it just felt brilliant. So that is a very strong role model. Erm, a couple of teachers, Nicola is very good at planning, I have modelled a lot of my planning on what we did together in year 6.*

(Jayne, interview section 309 , my emphasis)

Nicola explains how she would learn from the ‘bad’ which she has written on her concept map...

*‘Ann        I mean certainly you see people and you think ‘oh, I wouldn’t do it like that’, is that what you mean by learning from the bad?’*

*Nicola    yeah, but not just saying ‘I wouldn’t do it like that’ saying why you wouldn’t do it like that, thinking of a better way, rather than just silently criticizing, thinking how I would do it, and trying to remember those things’*

(Nicola, interview 1 section 231 - 232)

Here Nicola evaluates my comment as being overly critical and suggests that this type of learning involves some internal dialogue, thinking about ‘a *better way*’, an alternative action. This suggests that within her internally persuasive dialogue there are other options and alternative discourses of action.

Opportunities to observe were, as previously explained, limited, and certain aspects of leadership were never on public show – individual meetings between Beth and staff, financial work and decision making, encounters with governors and the LA were not generally observed by, or available to the CLs or to myself as a researcher. The deputy head was a member of the Governing body, and dealt with one external network that brought her into contact with the LA, but still had no access to school accounting/finance or staff deployment issues since all TA contracts and work were directed by Beth. Leadership seemed to be effectively separated out into two areas. Those areas related to teaching children, the learning/curriculum and those concerned with organizational aspects, staff contracts and management, financial management and governance, national policy and the Local Authority. It was these organizational aspects of school leadership that tended to be retained by Beth, to be privatized by her and invisible to the group.

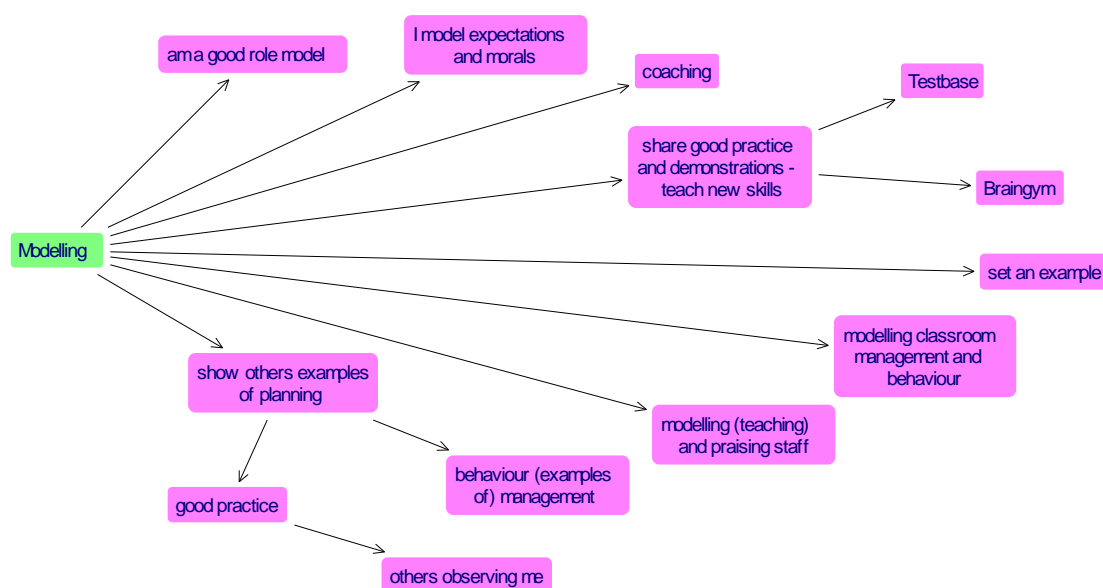
The visible aspects of leadership were those connected to teaching/learning and curriculum for children and parental communications. Leadership in these areas by the headteacher, Ingrid and Frances who were the established workers in the school was particularly important for the two new CLs (Nicola and Jayne) and could also be construed to be important for Frances and Nicola, who had only worked in this school. The leadership practices in this school were the only ones that they could observe as workers due to the limited opportunities to network and enter other schools or experience other training than the school led INSET. This situation exacerbated the reliance on role models within the school as a resource to draw upon in terms of developing an individual evaluative note about leadership. This, combined with the lack of discussion opportunities about leadership practice, also meant that the observation of role models ran the risk of misinterpretation. There were few opportunities to check out another individual's rationale or discuss why particular leadership actions had taken place.

The place of modelling as a genre of learning within that of career development was particularly apparent when the success of Ingrid became known (December 06). She had achieved the NPQH in the summer of 2005 and had now achieved her first headship. This seems to have increased the likelihood of Ingrid being a role model for Nicola who had very clear ideas about her career progression. Interestingly, the model Ingrid represented was one of achievement, how to go about succeeding at headship via the route of the 'Whole school project' required by the NPQH. The adoption of this model, the whole school project, the way it was carried out, the work done, and the transfer of this to another subject area (maths to literacy) was taken on board and closely followed by Nicola in her plans to complete her own '*whole-school project*' with a view to obtaining deputyship in the future (Section 5.22). The boundaries of the project remained the same (children and staff, not parents, governors or CLs) and Nicola was confident that the headteacher would give permission for such a project as a precedent had been established. In terms of learning for leadership, this close following of a successful model was anticipated to increase the chances of a successful promotion. The genre of individualistic career planning had meant that this whole school project was not discussed with others in the group which, once again, limited debate about the nature of leadership for individuals, and opportunities to lead in different ways within the whole school were not explored.

### **6.1.2 Leadership means *being* a role model**

Whilst learning from observation and role models does not necessarily imply an imbalance of power /authority, many of the role models identified were 'upwards looking' in terms of the hierarchy of the school. It was clear that there was a perceived intention to learn here, even if the knowledge was tacit rather than explicit. Whether they were experienced and confident or not it was also apparent

that these leaders regarded themselves as explicit role models for their staff. The ‘I lead when I ...’ map by Jayne indicated her three concerns with modelling: *Classroom behaviour and management; teaching* and thirdly, *expectations and morals*. Nicola had just itemized, ‘I lead when I ‘... *am a good role model*. The headteacher mentioned ‘*setting an example*’ (Beth) and Frances spoke of ‘*showing others examples planning*’ and ‘*showing others TARGSATS*’ (a software programme). The only person not to include some sort of explicit modelling for others as part of leadership in her map was Ingrid, whose learning map (above) had focused on a negative modelling experience. However, in her team meetings and INSET training of staff I observed her demonstrating dance moves and Brain Gym as teaching methods – physically modelling teaching for other staff. The range of modelling concepts identified can be seen in map 4.



**Concept Map 4 - Modelling ( from ‘I lead when I’ composite map/partial, researcher defined grouping)**

This genre of modelling and direct instructions to staff as a pedagogy of learning seemed to apply to both adults and children. The General Teaching Council for England says that teachers ‘*model the characteristics they are trying to inspire in*

*young people*' (GTC 2008) and the idea that teachers act as role models for children in the classroom is well understood by teachers. The comments about role modelling applied more widely than to staff, Jayne in particular suggested that expectations and morals applied to both staff and children. The idea of being a role model seemed to have been transported from the genre of teaching children to that of dealing with other adult staff members in terms of adult learning and in terms of the purpose of leadership within the school. (This slippage from genres for teaching children to the teaching and learning of adults within the school is explored further in chapter 7). Here modelling can be perceived as fitting with the genre of school time as being limited and pressured. It was perceived as a time-effective mechanism of passing on knowledge to others and was used both intentionally and unintentionally to achieve this by all the leadership group members.

From an organizational point of view, those who are considered successful examples of practice by managers or headteachers may not be considered as positive role models by peers and others within the organization. The selection of positive and negative role models is an individual enterprise and, unlike mentoring or coaching, does not require the active engagement of the person being 'modelled'. The intentionality of leaders here, modelling 'good practice' in the classroom and as managers, had little evidence to connect it with the way that learning took place for others. This disconnection was exacerbated by the lack of discussion about leadership and leadership behaviours. Jayne, in particular, had difficulties when this model of learning failed to work (direct instructions, modelling and doing together discussed in section 6.32) and this generated a level of discomfort and crisis. However, this difficulty did not provoke explicit identification or examination of modelling as a mechanism for adult learning. There seemed to be no evaluative discussion about how adults might learn best in the work environment until this issue was raised through the research project.

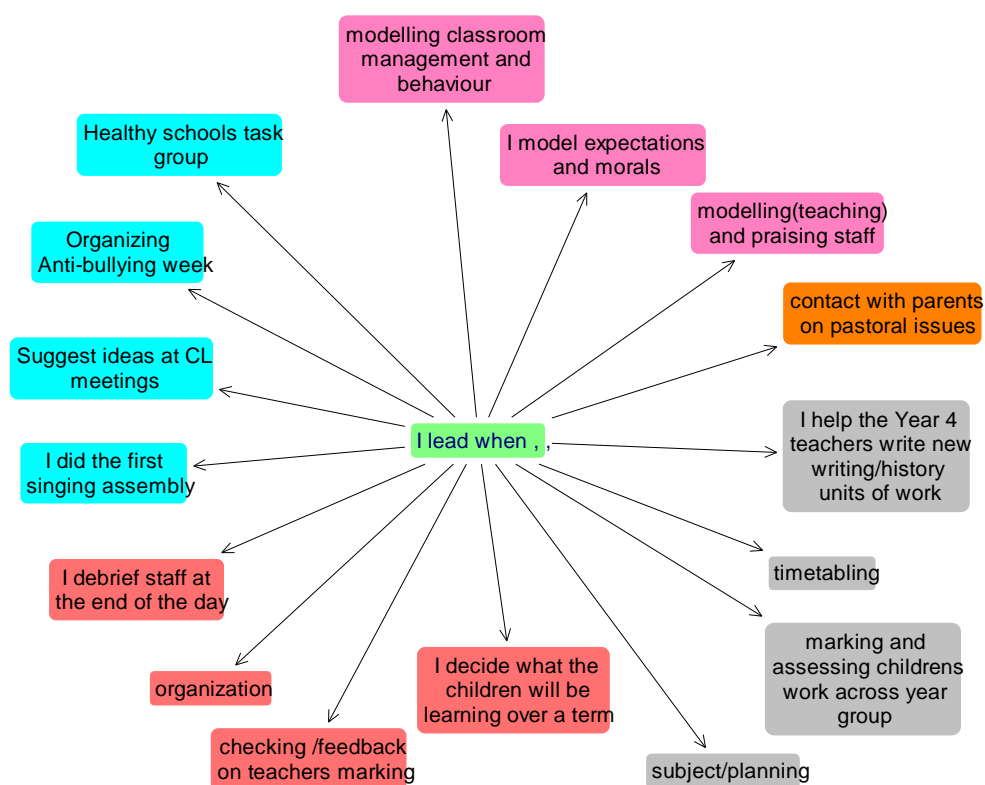
## **6.2 Leadership performance spaces as learning spaces**

Because most leadership learning takes place 'on the job', once leaders are in the role the spaces available to perform leadership become crucial. It was this space for performance of leadership that was circumscribed by the social and physical boundaries constructed by the school and the group themselves. However, the way that boundaries shaped the performance spaces available differed for each group member. Performance spaces for leadership are the areas where leaders can both draw on and develop the repertoires of leadership (actions/styles/behaviours) that compose their range of leadership capabilities (Sinclair 2004). These spaces build and shape the experience of new and established leaders. They also impact on the interaction between current knowledge, the experience of leadership and the potential for future development. The space for learning and future development relates to both the types of spaces available and the range of genres that the learner can access within that space.

### **6.2.1 Limited but expanding spaces – the three Curriculum Leaders**

The leadership space available for Nicola, Frances and Jayne as CLs was closely defined by their roles as year leaders. Their leadership maps illustrated this clearly, with fewer concepts relating to leadership either across the curriculum (their CL role in developing the curriculum via the subject teams) and in the few references to initiative throughout the school, SMT meetings and whole school projects. Below is the 'I lead when I... map' for Jayne, which shows the way she distributes the concepts for the different areas.





Key: Salmon = managing year group relationships  
 Pink = Modelling  
 Grey = organizing the year curriculum/teaching activities  
 Light Blue = Whole school Leadership (meetings and activities)  
 Orange = contact with parents  
 Green= Prime descriptor

#### Concept Map 5 - Jayne 'I lead when I...' (coded)

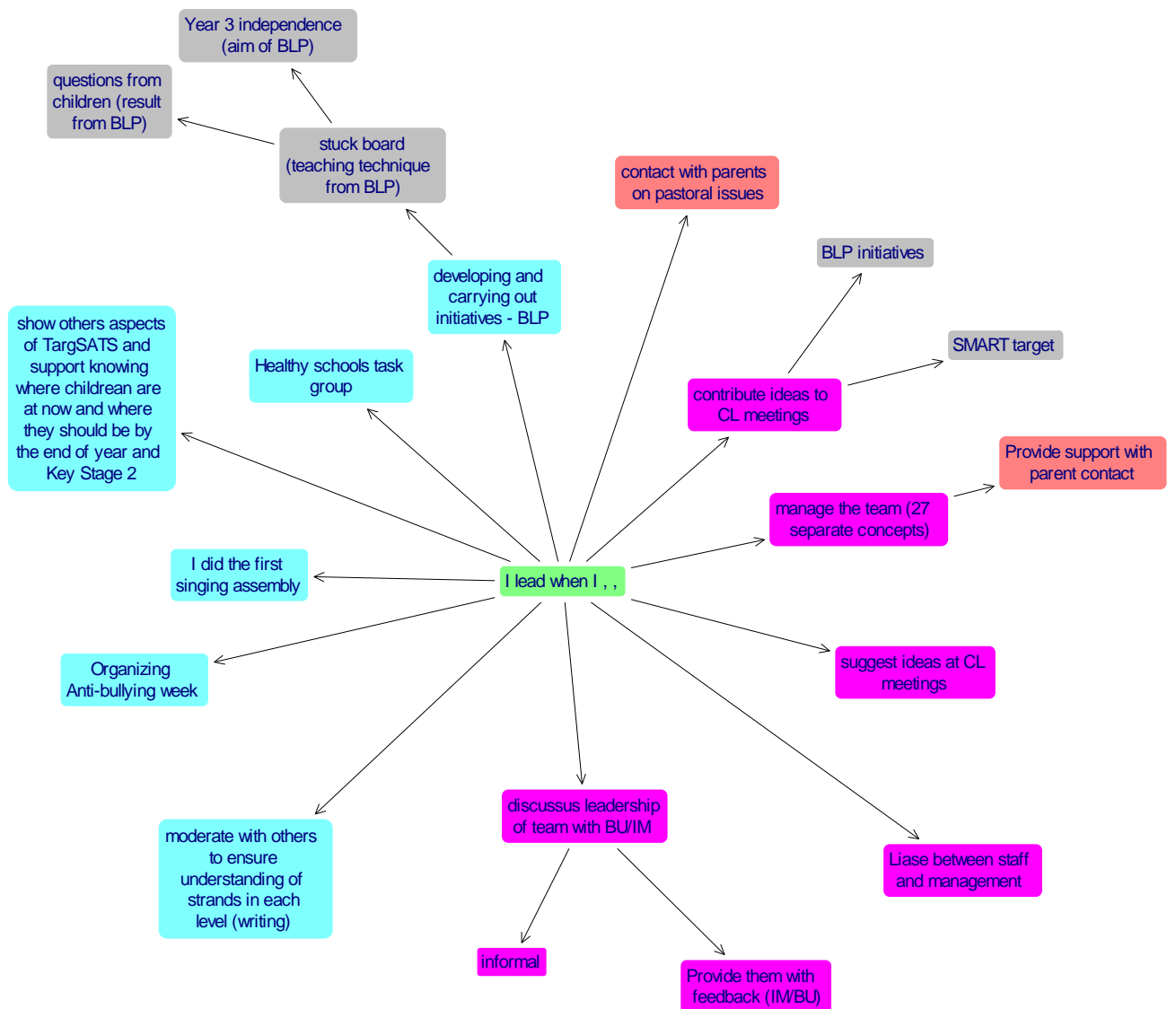
Whilst each map varied in terms of the numbers of concepts developed, the areas covered were remarkably similar for each CL. Out of 73 concepts generated by the three CLs the overall majority related to team organization, year group teaching and supporting teachers in the CLs own team. The range of concepts are summarized here:

Concept group	Number of concepts
Modelling teaching and managing year group relationships	32
Organizing the year curriculum/teaching activities (including feedback from SMT meetings)	25
Discussion and meetings with other leaders in the school	9
Whole school activities	5
Contact with parents	2

**Table 7 - Composite Concept Map 'I lead when I...'(Jayne, Nicola and Frances)  
summary of categories**

The majority of performance spaces for leadership were clearly linked to organizing the work for the Year Teams and supporting staff, particularly in regard to modelling good practice as teachers. These roles were important, but in view of the newness in terms of teaching experience of two of the three CLs, some exploration of what 'good practice' was might have been expected. As I indicate later, the way that boundaries were constructed meant that there was little room for exploration of this important issue.

There did seem to be a clear difference between the majority of leadership activities (organization of year group activities and modelling teaching and managing relationships) which made up 57 out of the 73 leadership concepts and the 16 remaining concepts relating to what could be termed whole school issues and discussion (Concept Map 6).



Light Blue = Whole School Leadership

Pink = discussions and dialogue with other leaders

Grey = planned impact on teaching

Orange = direct contact with parents.

Green = Prime descriptor

**Concept Map 6 - Composite Concept Map (partial) 'I lead when I...' (Jayne, Nicola and Frances) coded.**

It is here that the idea of 'whole school' issues and projects becomes important in the language of leadership learning and as opportunities for CLs to perform and

practise their leadership. It also became clear, during the interviews and fieldwork over the year, that the opportunities to practise whole school initiatives and the opportunities to enter into discussion with other leaders were limited. Even though the CLs identified this variety of performance opportunities for leadership, they also commented on the boundaries placed on doing this in terms of time and the ability to move into another person's classroom whilst they were teaching. Time restrictions were raised by Nicola and Jayne in the group discussion and Frances had made the point that she would like to improve teaching through shared work in the classroom, currently not possible due to the timetable and teaching in individual spaces. Here Frances responds to BU on the issue of curriculum leadership:

*“Frances        I think if you're expecting the curriculum leaders to have any sort of significant effect on their team or as much effect as there could be, you'd need, we've got to actually get in there and do stuff with them, we can't rely on them seeing, we can't rely on them to actually just go and do it, some of them will, but they need that, it's this modelling thing again isn't it, they need us in there and doing things with them.*

*Beth            mmhm*

*Jayne            yes, I agree, and I think also if um, if you have the time to do it you're doing it together and they come to you and there's something, and they never come to you at the right time, which is fine because children don't come to you at the right time, but you think "right, I'll stop what I'm doing" I explain it and so you've spent time explaining it, then they've come back to you –  
" I wasn't quite sure about that bit" and really sometimes its just quicker to say "OK, this is how you could do it, watch" and they can observe and then copy.”*

(Group feedback session sections 195-198)

This extract indicates the tensions between the ways that these three leaders regarded learning and sharing good practice for both themselves and their own team members [NB the use of 'teams' here refers to teachers not CLs]. Frances is

using the idea of working together in the classroom, modelling behaviour and teaching techniques for other teachers and giving direct advice. She has moved to a more specific position on the learning that people need to do that includes discussion and guidance rather than relying on staff initiative. This moves from non-specific observational modelling to the direct coaching required to ensure that staff improve. Jayne takes a slightly different approach, seeming to equate staff with children and indicates that she has tried verbally explaining, but this strategy has failed and she suggests that observational learning is the most time-efficient way of spreading teaching practice through the school. The implication here is that shared understanding has less importance than consistent behaviour within pressures of school time and pupil performance.

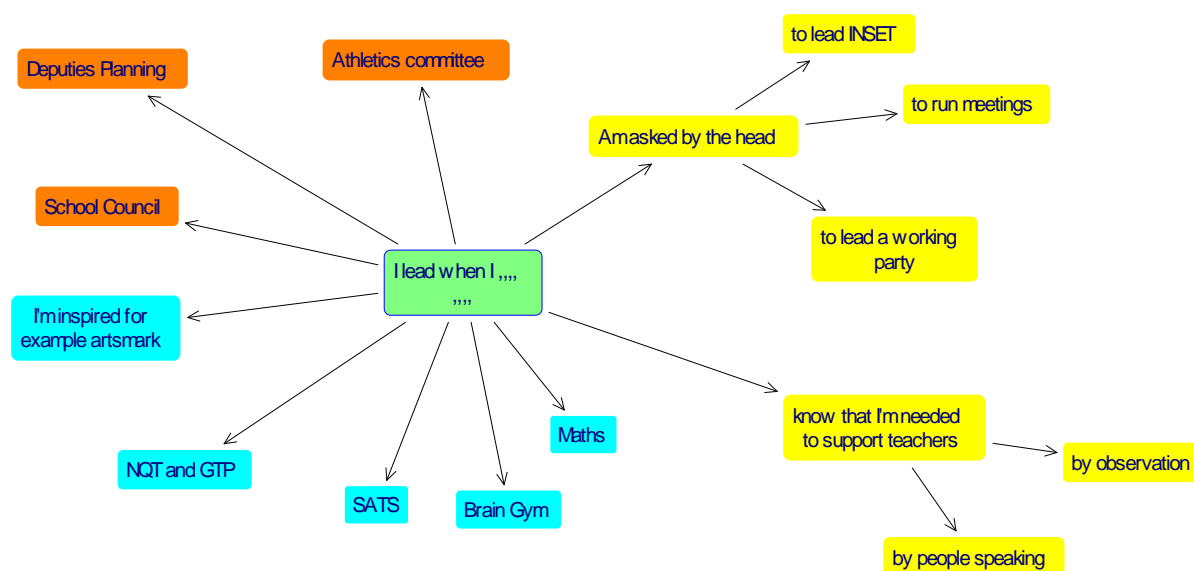
The three CLs saw their performance spaces for leadership as potential areas for development, and even Frances, who did not intend to remain a curriculum leader, intended to take her whole school role supporting the Building Learning Power programme forward to the next year. The results of the discussion during the research feedback meeting resulted in the headteacher making more space/time available for the CLs to lead their teams through the appointment of an additional member of staff for the summer term. Beth also planned to delegate staff CPD meetings to the CLs during the following year and facilitated their attendance at the LEA training for this in the summer term of 2007.

Boundaries between three CLs also impacted on performance space for leadership when they were offered different opportunities by the headteacher. Because Nicola was registered on the Fast Track programme this impacted on the headteacher's view of her as capable (in both Beth's opinion and ratified by those outside the school, as she had achieved selection for the programme) and it seemed that some opportunities were offered to her in preference to the other CLs. For example, when Beth asked the group if they were interested in interviewing prospective CLs all CLs

expressed an interest, but Nicola was immediately chosen with no explanation. Nicola herself expressed the view that some of the opportunities made available to her were seen as privileges by other staff members (section 5.31). The affordances (Billett, 2004a,b) made available by the organization to Nicola were *ad-hoc* and relied on her continuing good relationship with the headteacher.

### 6.2.2 Diminishing space – the deputy headteacher

Ingrid, did not view her leadership performance space in such a positive way. In contrast to the expanding performance spaces for the CLs, she commented that she had less opportunity for performing leadership now than she had on joining the school two years ago. Her comments during the interview point to her discomfort with her role, and her map reflected these views, indicating her difficult relationship with the headteacher.



Light Blue = Whole School Leadership

Yellow = leadership and management

Orange = external networks

Green = External networks

**Concept Map 7 - Ingrid, 'I lead when I...' (coded)**

All the leadership activities mentioned here can be regarded as ‘whole school’ performances, but some were clearly in close relationship with the headteacher (INSET, NQTs, Artsmark) and one line of Ingrid’s map clearly implied some sort of followership in her role (*asked by the head*). Surprisingly, Ingrid did not mention here her role on the Governing Body, and in her interview talked most positively about her roles outside the school (the Deputies’ network and the cross authority Athletics planning committee) as places where she felt that she could lead. In her interview she looks back at when she was first in post,

*“Ingrid I have worked with other teachers across [LEA], through, oh, I’ve finished now but I did a book for the LEA, and it was for 20 days. It seemed to go on forever my 20 days, and I worked with other teachers in [the LEA], and other schools that needed help in Maths so that was really good, so I, really like to do loads of little bits,*

*Ann to get outside more maybe than inside*

*Ingrid yeah, I do, yeah, I do more outside. I do it inside, but ((it doesn’t happen)) It did initially, I have to say when I first came here, huge, everything they couldn’t believe, they were saying to me, we can’t believe you’ve got that, we’ve been wanting a maths ((specialist?)) to come, we’ve got one, we’ve wanted coats,[for staff on playground duty] I got the coats, you know what I mean, I’ve made all of it and that’s just all, ended now.”*

(Ingrid Mayes, interview sections 330-332)

Ingrid’s frustrations with the restrictions to her leadership performance within the school were expressed to me in a number of ways. In this extract she is bemoaning the deskilling caused by the use of corporate letters to parents, part of the school’s strategy for ensuring that communication with parents was clear and consistent.

*“Ingrid [describing the previous school role as team leader] I was making decisions and our team would all do it. Here, every team is the same, we all have to do it the same, everybody gives out letters only on a Friday, you know, its got to be mirrored, and I suppose I've got into that now, its taken two years, but it makes you not think for yourself, and I do feel that I've deskilled myself, [...] you know, even like in letters, there's a standard letter you just get the letter and you take out where you're going and say to them where you're going and the price just changes and the date changes.”*

(Ingrid interview section 130)

Although Ingrid had opportunities for leadership performance outside the school the ‘shrinkage’ of her performance space within the school in terms of her responsibilities for the NQTs, her perception of being ‘deskilled’ as a year leader and her relationship with Beth resulted in her looking for a leadership role at another school. Her achievement of the NPQH gave her currency to obtain a headteacher post and her own school where she could put her own ideas of leadership into practice. Ingrid had not yet considered the potential boundaries for headteachers, and, for Beth, the headteachers performance of leadership was shaped by both internal and external factors.

### **6.2.3 Shaping performance spaces and managing organizational boundaries: the headteacher’s performance of leadership**

On one level Beth could be seen as having the authority and power invested in her position to limit and control the performance spaces for leadership available to the other four members of the leadership group. Certainly, her deteriorating relationship with Ingrid led Ingrid to suggest that was the case. However, in her map and interview Beth developed a qualitatively different view of her leadership performance, one based around intentions and evaluation rather than tasks and organization. Her concept map for ‘I lead when I...’ illustrates this range (Map 8).





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Beth's experience as a headteacher created a rich map, focused on ideas and relationships with people. Some ideas were drawn from the current social languages of school leadership '*vision*' '*share the vision*' '*blue sky thinking*' '*stakeholders*' '*SIP*' (school improvement plan) and the reference to DfES initiatives. The majority of concepts related to whole school issues and teaching/performance. Beth, as would be expected, viewed the whole school as her concern and space for leadership, but in terms of staff learning modelling as a specific area (pink) was balanced with developing staff (yellow) through '*support*' (mentioned twice) and allowing people to '*make mistakes*', although the consequences of mistakes could be uncomfortable.

The leadership activity concerned with developing staff learning was tempered by the way that Beth had a thread of '*clear*' communication throughout her map, in relation to both conveying her own ideas and ensuring that others understand '*what is already decided*'. This type of communication could be characterised as treating language as transparent and '*instructional*' since these communications expressed the authoritative voice of the headteacher, backed by the power of her hierarchical position and closing down space for discussion of alternatives. In her later conversations with me Beth specifically discussed how she would like to delegate more (not appearing as a leadership concept) and to trust others to take on tasks in their own way. She suggested at the end of the year that although the '*opportunities to develop and make mistakes*' and '*support others to find their own solutions*' were identified here as possible ways in which Beth might develop leaders the constraints and pressures on the school had meant that this type of development opportunity had been rare in practice.

Beth's understanding of her arena for performance of leadership was important as this impacted on the possibilities for others within the school. Opportunities to be

involved in the recruitment of CLs and support staff were made available at her invitation (as noted above), and ongoing management of support staff and NQTs was restricted to Beth and Ingrid, although in view of the tensions between them this largely remained Beth's domain. There were no opportunities for any of the group to take part in financial decision making; this was done by Beth outside the school in her time at home.

In this map/interview she does not mention her performance of leadership outside the school environment (apart from the mention of communication with stakeholders which included governors, parents and community), yet our discussions through the year indicated that she was networking with other headteachers in her local cluster group. She had also attended the NAHT Headteachers Conference and attended other local training/discussion events for headteachers. Her chosen contacts with a select group of headteachers were viewed as supportive, and the local cluster meetings a venue for discussion and support rather than a venue for exercising her own leadership. Beth's view that LA training was poor acted as a strong influence on her INSET training programme within the school, and she attended (as did the CLs) only the sessions legally required for successful implementation of the government programme of school reforms (this year CPD training which she commented was a '*waste of time*' Fieldnotes July 07). She preferred to bring into the school selected influences; a private training provider and the BLP project were influences that she thought would benefit other staff and myself as a researcher.

As I have said earlier, taking a whole school perspective meant managing the boundaries around the school in response to both internal and external pressures. To reiterate, the external environment was characterised by Beth as one where parents were critical and demanding, with multiple demands for change from Government initiatives such as the introduction of TLR posts and CPD requirements and an expensive local housing market which made it difficult to attract new staff.

The internal environment was characterised as vulnerable due to the additional intake of year 3 children, the high proportion of newly qualified and new staff and the three new appointments to CL posts this year. These features combined to shape Beth's strategy which inclined towards closure of the boundaries between the school and the wider educational environment.

This strategy of closure allowed Beth to focus on consistency across the school in the way that teaching took place using her own established methods of curriculum delivery and assessment of children's performance. This internal focus, strongly led by BU herself, targeted specific areas of improvement (eg. Spellings) and tightly defined teaching practice in order to ensure that SATS results were positive. The aim to achieve high SATS results took priority over other issues, for example, Jayne noted that the extra time she had gained after the discussions at the CL meetings had been eroded by the need to take a SATS booster class in addition to her other teaching time commitments (Fieldnotes 2<sup>nd</sup> May 07). This strategy of boundary closure and in-house staff training was successful in terms of the SATS results, which were excellent, but placed particular demands on staff. At the end of the year two of the NQTs resigned, with no other teaching job in mind, and two further members of staff left. Beth was once again facing a new school year with a staff cohort that included four NQTs, a new CL and a new Deputy Head.

Performance spaces for leadership were variable for the participants of the study. They related to the physical and social environment within the school and were also shaped by the tendency of the headteacher to close the boundaries of the school as an organization. There were some clear gaps in the spaces available (recruitment of staff, management of support staff and financial decision making), but there were also opportunities to influence the school, particularly in the areas of assessment and curriculum planning. Each participant's perception of the available performance spaces for leadership as expanding or diminishing was important as it revealed the

evaluative note that participants were developing in terms of their own, and other people's leadership.

### 6.3 Performance spaces - experience and authority

It was perhaps to be expected that the headteacher, as the most experienced leader, produced the richest and most complex concept maps about both leadership and learning (Leading = 35 concepts; Learning = 27 concepts). Her ten years as a headteacher at this school (only the IT technician had been at the school longer) meant that her historical knowledge, local awareness and experience in delivering the primary curriculum were strongly developed and hard to challenge. The boundaries around her practice of individualistic leadership had been firmed through this long association with place over this ten year time frame. Experience, in terms of numbers of years in the job, did count in relation to both confidence and authority in the leadership group. It seemed that the nature of her authority within the school was also bound up with this individualistic genre as Beth established an authoritative voice as leader that was monologic and unchallenged.

In developing their own leadership all the other participants in the group needed to begin to develop their own authoritative voices, and this was always done in relation to the voice of the headteacher, the authoritative voice that Bakhtin explains when he comments

*“In each epoch, in each social circle, in each small world of family, friends, acquaintances, and comrades in which a human being grows and lives, there are always authoritative utterances that set the tone – artistic, scientific, and journalistic works on which one relies, to which one refers, which are cited, imitated, and followed.”* (Bakhtin, 1986:88)

This authoritative tone was established by the headteacher through her role, style of leadership and the ways that she selected particular influences and drew them into the school. More than this, the importance of verbal modelling becomes clear when

considering Bakhtin's view of reported speech and authoritative discourse. Beth used both written instructions and suggestions about how to phrase things – direct examples of 'talk' in response to what to do and how to do questions from the CLs. Revisiting some of these sections on the maps/interviews gave a different emphasis to '*asking for advice*' (Nicola learning map) and '*talking to Beth and deciding strategies together*' (Jayne, learning map) and the reading of written instructions to parents and the written instructions to staff. The use of reported speech as replication through quotation, even when the words appear as the CLs own not only '*rents meaning*' (Holquist 2002) but also takes on the authority of the words. This authoritative discourse does not allow reinterpretation or negotiation, but is '*inflexible*' and demands '*unconditional allegiance*'. The words used are '*indissolubly fused with its authority – with political power, an institution, a person – and it stands and falls together with that authority*'. (Bakhtin, 1991:343) The authoritative person here was unquestionably the headteacher as once she had 'given' the words via the written instructions about report writing, examples of ways to deal with parents questions etc. she expected the words to be used in just that way. Being '*clear*' about issues could also be interpreted as being authoritative about instructions and issues.

The firm boundaries around the individualistic leadership, and the tendency to closure of the boundaries around the school as an organization, meant that there were few possibilities for the others in the leadership group to develop an authoritative voice. However, the school was subject to national changes in the terms and conditions for the leadership posts of CL. These changes, even though they had been evaluated negatively by Beth, meant that there was some room for negotiation in the way that leadership roles were viewed within the school. My feedback session as a researcher also provided an opportunity for reflection and

discussion about the CL role that had not previously taken place. During that session Beth asked the group about their views:

- Beth*                    *and I find it interesting because I think you're all saying you want to take on more than you said you wanted to when we talked about it originally back in July [06]*
- Nicola*                *not take on more, but do more properly, that's bad English, but*
- Jayne*                 *yeah*
- Beth*                 *but I think you're more confident about what you want to take on now, (( two together yes, more (( ?)) team))*
- Nicola*                *I don't know, I feel like already we're supposed to be monitoring their books, monitoring their teaching, but I don't feel that we can do it properly, and in a fair way to the people we're monitoring, because it is rushed, because there's not time to do it well.*
- Beth*                 *OK*
- Jayne*                 *mmm, I like, I like, I like doing the job, I like the role, but I find it frustrating that I can't do it properly, and I think is that bad, is that , I suppose it is frustrating in a way, because you sometimes think, if I was able to have, just a two hour block then I could get it done and I feel that it's sort of in lunch breaks or break times.*

(Group feedback recording sections 271 - 275)

This question from the headteacher marked a distinction between the three CLs as new, in a new role, and perhaps having some influence on shaping how that role could work within the school, compared to the deputy headteacher, who was not addressed here. Ingrid did not offer a comment on the role of CL in the school, although as deputy she could have expressed a view on how the role worked. Here the CLs conflate the year leader and 'official' CL role completely, as this is the way that they are expected to behave. Embedded within these comments about leadership are Nicola's comments reflecting ideas about the performative and monitoring role of her role as a leader in contrast with a view that leadership should be 'fair'. The issue of quality controlling the work of staff across curriculum areas and the issues of the time available to do this are raised again here, reprising the

importance given to quality monitoring the work of others in the CLs leadership maps. Jayne's map (section 6.21) illustrates the way that '*checking/feedback on teachers marking*' encapsulated the tensions that existed between supporting/developing staff and the hierarchal aspects of the role, where leaders used their authority in monitoring the work of others.

### 6.3.1 Developing an authoritative voice

One particular issue, that of the NQTs, illustrated the difficulties for the CLs and the deputy head in their struggle to develop their own authoritative voices. This issue illustrated the complexities in the way that authority was apparently distributed throughout the leadership group, but in practice, largely retained by the headteacher. The NQTs were spread across the year teams (Figure 1, section 5.1), but some of the formal arrangements for their guidance seemed less than clear to the CLs. At the leadership meeting during the second week of term (the second meeting for the CL group) a number of issues were raised. My notes from the meeting on the 13th September 2006 show that the NQT issue was raised near the start of the meeting.

**Beth suggests that school routines are not being carried out consistently and there is then a discussion about the overloading of work for the NQTs and confused messages. Beth, Frances and Ingrid are in clear agreement here (the more established senior staff). After some agreement on the problem Beth throws it back at the group**

Beth 'so what do we do?'

Jayne (a new CL) - focuses on own year and makes a practical suggestion – she is particularly feeling this issue as two of her year team are NQTs.

Ingrid - suggests that in her experience the common mistake is the creation of too much work by the NQTs themselves. The others agree with this.

Beth - directs the attention of the group back to the 'key issues' [she means here the most important in terms of the NQTs being prepared for a day's teaching ] and selecting them to focus on

Frances and Jayne – offer classroom management



Jayne - States that she will focus on the 8.30 – 8.50 time slot for her team, she acknowledges that other teams may have different priorities

Beth – suggests NQTs are focussed on wrong things and therefore not getting ready for class – IM agrees and gives example.

Ingrid– suggests that mentor should raise this issue with NQTs – she is their mentor.

**A discussion follows during which Beth strongly disagrees with Ingrid as she feels that Ingrid and Year Leaders cannot escape Deputy or Year Leader role, and the NQTs will feel threatened by this [mentor comment] anyway. Discussion on separation of mentor/deputy/leader role for some time, (not Frances or Nicola here). Nicola raises issue of what NQTs have been told already and gives an example of confusion and mixed messages. Ingrid agrees have been told 'too much' - feeding into their fear of doing the job properly. Ingrid has been checking her NQT marking in the children's books informally, and Jayne agrees that they (CLs) should look at the (children's) books and suggests that she will do this in the year meeting.**

(Fieldnotes CL meeting 13th September 2006)

Here Beth begins by suggesting that school routines are important and should consistently be followed by everyone. She does not specifically identify NQTs but it is clear that all the group understand that this is who she is referring to. Although concrete suggestions to resolve the problem are made by Jayne and Frances, these are ignored by both Beth and Ingrid, and both of them imply that this problem is of the NQTs own making. The issue of how to deal with this in terms of mentoring or lines of authority are raised, and the division between Ingrid, deputy head, and Beth becomes apparent. Ingrid had previously been mentor and supervisor for all NQTs in the school, but in view of the number of them this year Beth had decided that she and Ingrid would have joint responsibility for the group. The group were treated as a whole, individual NQTs were not allocated to either Beth or Ingrid. This had been Beth's decision and Ingrid was not always happy about this. In this meeting Ingrid felt that her experience allowed her to separate the roles of mentor and deputy head/year leader, whereas Beth disagreed, and strongly argued that this issue was a matter of ensuring that NQTs could fulfil their role in the classroom each day, a management issue for the school. The discussion ended with Jayne, who had two

NQTs in her team, again making a practical suggestion, but the major issue of lines of authority was left unresolved. Beth moved on to lunchtime routines, an issue concerned with establishing good school habits but with the emphasis on children rather than staff behaviour.

Ingrid, in her interview, described her feelings about the responsibility for the NQTs was being taken away by Beth [note Beth described this as sharing the role to relieve stress] . Ingrid suggests that this has caused confusion, and finds it hard to describe her role as deputy. Here she has just described her experiences at her previous school,

*Ann    [..], what do you think it is your role as a deputy, what do you think?*

*Ingrid  if I knew I would, I just, I sometimes don't know, I have to be honest*

*Ann    well, let's try, what do you see as your responsibilities*

*Ingrid  ummm, they change all the time, [right OK] I think at the moment I see maths as a responsibility, year 5 team as a responsibility, supporting the NQTs, but that's weird because there's so many of them, 'cos normally I have the ones I look after and at the moment we're looking after all of them and I'm not sure how that's going to pan out, I think they need one person, personally I think one person, but lets try it this way, that's what's been suggested. Um, cos I like, I'm very much a time manager, and I like to know what I've got to do and then I'll make it fit in with my time, but when it's a bit ambiguous, because its not all just my job I find that hard because people don't work in the same way. So that's quite difficult.*

(Interview Ingrid 81 - 84)

Ingrid seems to be frustrated by this lack of opportunity for leadership, and the retraction of her 'authoritative voice' in respect of decisions about the way that issues concerning the NQTs should be managed. This ambiguity in terms of who held the authoritative voice in terms of addressing the NQTs resulted in a more serious crisis of confidence in Jayne's leadership later in the term.

### 6.3.2 An individual crisis

Here the individualized nature of the CL role as 'leader' became apparent at the same time as some members of the group could be seen to be developing a '*holding environment*' (Kahn 2001) to reassure the leader concerned. The issue is surfaced for discussion by the headteacher (despite some resistance from the two CLs) and an immediate resolution is proposed. My notes from the 1.11.06 describe the scene as I entered the room with Beth .

Jayne and Frances are already in the room, Jayne is marking a pile of children's books. Beth starts straight away by asking if they are OK, both say yes, but Beth follows up with 'you don't look OK are you sure?' Jayne's response this time is 'OK but under pressure'. Jayne puts the marking she is doing away. Beth persists in asking what the problem is (but reflecting on this later it seems that she already knows from Ingrid and is trying to get Jayne to come out with the issue) and Jayne replies 'marking and everything', rather reluctantly. This is the opening that Beth has been waiting for.

The 'everything' turns out to be her NQTs who haven't marked correctly (to assessment levels) despite her explaining it to them and the year leaders (Jayne and Frances) demonstrating at a marking 'party' (lunch). The problems have been revealed through Ingrid's moderation of the writing assessment. Beth obviously wants to deal with this issue and clearly says that she doesn't think that Jayne should be doing the remarking for the NQTs – reasons being she doesn't have time and they (NQTs) need to go through the 'learning curve'. Beth implies Jayne is being too nice and 'soft' on them. [Nicola and Ingrid arrive during this discussion and join in] Ingrid agrees with Beth and clarifies that the NQT marking was clearly not good enough. Nicola agrees that the two girls have 'got to learn' and that redoing the marking themselves is the only way for them to do this. Jayne resists, she is clearly uncomfortable and says that she feels a failure, she doesn't know what else to do to get them to work to the standards. Beth strongly rebuts this and says that Jayne is not a failure and that she shouldn't feel like this. It is the situation with these two NQTs and not her fault.

Beth and Ingrid move into a discussion about how the two NQTs work, play and live together and generally 'are in each others pockets' and how this is a bad thing. Frances suggests that if they had known how they would act they wouldn't have put them in the same year group. Beth imitates one of the girls teaching in a 'non professional' manner (feet up on a chair) and they laugh. Beth moves to how to help Jayne with this problem. Beth strongly suggests that the girls are asked to remark today instead of Jayne doing this tonight. Beth clarifies that Ingrid can supervise and check their work and it will get done. It seems that this plan has been discussed with Ingrid prior to the meeting as Ingrid's time is available and she shows no surprise at this suggestion. Beth asks the

other CLs if they really need the year 4 team NQTs for 'subject teams' – no-one does. Jayne agrees (a bit reluctantly) and the meeting moves on.

[ 15 minutes on this discussion]

Beth moves into her normal mode and opens her book, runs through agenda and asks for any other items. [the meeting goes on for the allotted time]

After the meeting I follow as Beth goes to the staffroom where most of the staff are gathered and she instructs the two NQTs and the other year 4 teacher to remain in the staffroom because Ingrid will be speaking to them. Later I observe the year 4 team, including Jayne, sitting in the staffroom (on show) remarking children's books under the instruction of Ingrid.

(Fieldnotes 1.11.06)

Several issues about leadership were raised here, provoked by a 'failure' in the system concerned with marking children's work. Jayne, as year leader for the NQTs was taking responsibility for their actions, fitting with the role and individualized responsibilities for leadership assumed within the school in the previous extract. Her leadership was under question because the NQTs had not performed, and she was doing their work for them. This in turn raised the issue of the learning model for the NQTs – Jayne's model of '*showing and doing together*' had failed, and she did not know what to do next. Beth, Ingrid and Nicola invoked a genre of learning from 'experience' (mistakes) – but also a genre that seemed linked to their view of NQTs as children, one of being criticized and being made to repeat work. This latter genre would be imposed through authority, that of the seniority of Ingrid and Beth.

As this hierarchal authority was imposed Jayne's position as leader was temporarily withdrawn, and she joined the remarking group supervised by Ingrid. Jayne became a follower, not only in terms of the plan to rectify the problem, but also in terms of a clear change of role in relation to Ingrid, following her directions along with the rest of her team. This arrangement was very public, taking place in the staffroom, and the use by Beth of her deputy to assert authority here both withdrew Jayne's authority as year leader and at the same time, retained Beth's own role as softer mentor and guide to the two NQTs.

This issue illustrates the connections that Beth made between the idea of leadership and the issue of '*professional distance*'. Her criticism of Jayne's leadership as 'soft' and her 'niceness' to the NQTs here was reprised later in her comments that Jayne had 'learnt a lot' from this experience about social distance in work relationships. This leadership is not only individual, but also the implication is that leadership is something authoritarian and socially distant from the group. The softer, more supportive '*holding environment*' (Kahn 2001) provided by Frances at the start of the session is evaluated by Beth who critiques the emotional elements on show and firmly restates her own view of leadership as the model of practice here.

The '*repair*' to the social order generates an organizational action that Gheradi (2006) characterizes as a '*patch*'. A specific action, added to usual routines and behaviour, that acts to remedy this particular problem/issue (NQT learning) rather than seeking a longer term change to organizational practices. The immediate problem of inaccurate assessment was resolved by the remark of the children's work. In terms of individual and organizational learning the picture was more complex. The event was not discussed by the group after the immediate resolution was put in place and Jayne felt that there were ramifications in terms of her relationship with the two NQTs as leader. Much later in the year (May 07) Jayne commented to me about being a leader that she

**feels a little more like a leader now, but sometimes it is not clear to her who is responsible for the team - for example the two NQTs go 'straight to Beth.'**  
(Fieldnotes 2.05.07)

It seemed that there were reverberations from the decision to revoke Jayne's authority as a leader and that these were felt throughout the year by both Jayne and the NQTs. Jayne had little opportunity to recapture any 'authoritative voice' and to obtain a space to practice leadership with the NQTs in her team. Organizationally, the difficult issue of responsibility for the NQTs continued to be an unresolved issue,

and the relationship between the head and deputy meant that this issue was unlikely to be surfaced for discussion.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

Performance spaces were crucial in offering particular sorts of learning opportunities for the participants of the study. The material, social and time boundaries within the school were significant in shaping the modes of learning which tended to be through direct instructions and modelling. There was little opportunity or time for exploring leadership through discussion and modelling was seen as both effective and efficient. Adult learning was not explicitly discussed and it seemed that there was an uncritical acceptance that models of learning that worked for children could be used with the adults in the staff team. There were difficulties with this as an embedded mode of learning and the problems with NQT learning in the school highlighted not only the drawbacks of modelling as a learning strategy but also the lack of space for the CLs to begin to develop their own authoritative voices as leaders.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Dialogue and the evaluative note – learning through the genres of institutional and teacher talk.**

Although the participants of the study located spaces for discussion (formal or informal) as opportunities to learn to lead in their concept maps (Concept Map 1), in practice explicit discussion about leadership was notably absent from the meetings that I observed. The constraints of time and the internal boundaries, both social and physical, within the school meant that there were very few opportunities to talk with other leaders, especially as a group. With the exception of the concept map feedback meeting (set up explicitly to discuss the research) leadership as a topic was not on the agenda at SMT meetings. As I indicated in Chapter 6, learning through role modeling and performance was not explicitly supported by reflection or discussion. This raised a question about the types of discussions that were available for the leaders at Peony Hill and how these discussions might contribute to leadership learning.

In this chapter I first of all look at the way that explicit discussion about leadership was submerged beneath institutional talk with its focus on performance and organization. When leadership issues did surface they were therefore significant for the participants (and the research) as it was here that the various positions of the leaders became explicit. I outline two incidents where leadership became an issue pertinent to the work of the school. I then go on to look at the way that the routine spaces available for talk between adults in the school, the INSET sessions and the CL meetings, took place through particular genres of talk. I illustrate how the genres

of *instructional teacher* and *modelling teacher* were genres within the organizational repertoire that migrated through the organization from classroom teaching to the arena of adult learning and leadership meetings. The implications that this had for the way that learners developed an evaluative note about both their own leadership and that of others is discussed in the final section of the chapter.

## 7.1 Leadership – a silent discourse

Gheradi (2006) separates out the ideas of '*talking in practice and talking about practice*' (2006:98) and identifies how organizational silence on particular issues can be significant in terms of specific practices. Breaking this silence makes these particular practices, in this case leadership, '*negotiable and open to scrutiny*' (2006:98). At Peony Hill this silence, the absence of talk about leadership, was achieved as the SMT meetings dealt only with the organizational work of leadership: the practical issues that needed resolving. A typical extract from my observations at the start of one of the meetings illustrates this:

**Beth again has her 'agenda' book, and opens this and asks the others for any items they want to discuss (she clearly has a list already written).**

Frances presentation, Ed.city.com

Nicola Spellings, Scrooge, subject teams

Jayne Artsmark

Frances assessment and highlighting sheets  
(Nicola and Jayne nod)

Beth SMART – presentation criteria anyone,

**BU has written down the suggestions and starts the meeting with an item from her own list picking up Frances's suggestion]**

(Fieldnotes, SMT meeting 11.10. 06. SMART=Peony Hill code of conduct for children, They: ***Speak appropriately and listen attentively, Meet new challenges, Always organise themselves and their belongings, Respect property and the environment, Treat others with consideration and respect.*** 'Code of conduct doc' 2007)

Although often about practical issues these opportunities for discussion were identified by the participants as ways in which they learned to lead. The aspects of



knowledge that were embedded within this genre were the details of the practical and organizational aspects of the school and the information needed to fulfill the CL role. The CLs were absorbing things that they needed to know and the way things were done. One way that this knowledge was acquired was through direct instruction.

Talk was implicit in other concept map categories, for example: *feedback*, *experience*, *working with a others in a team* and *during courses*. However, observations and recordings indicated that these discussions in other areas of school life rarely focussed explicitly on leadership but on individual actions and tasks. This left individuals to develop their own evaluative note about the way in which these tasks were undertaken and their understanding of leadership. This understanding was tested out through practical action rather than through discussion about ways to lead *per se*. Whilst the learning maps illustrated the rich variety of the ways that it was possible to go about learning leadership, the reality in day to day work was that opportunities to go about learning in this way were limited. In particular, as noted earlier, possibilities for attending courses and meetings outside the school were restricted, and both the frequency and the way in which reflection, feedback and discussion took place were limited by the boundaries in play and the pressure for achievements in the school. For example, although brainstorming in SMT meetings is identified as a discussion opportunity for leaders when learning might take place, these discussions concerned the resolution of timetabling issues, homework and assessment problems. Staff relationships, finance, whole school mission and strategy or longer term developmental planning which might be seen as the concerns of the leadership group were not covered. The priorities for discussion were the immediate, functional and organizational issues of the day rather than longer term strategic issues or more reflective discussions. Whilst this was clearly one way in which leaders learned the organizational processes, the processes in themselves were not open to challenge.

### 7.1.1 Surfacing leadership - Who is a leader?

This discursive silence was occasionally broken by the participants of the study, rather than in response to my research interactions with them. Of course this does not mean that they did not talk about leadership together when I was not there to observe, but the interviews and observations seemed to confirm that explicit discussion of leadership was an unusual rather than a routine occurrence. The two occasions discussed here had very different characteristics and can be interpreted in terms of Gheradi's ideas about '*repair*' to the normative social order (silence about leadership) and the associated learning that may, or may not, take place as a result of this social action (the surfacing of the issue and the repair which resumes the silence (Gheradi 2006)).

During a SMT meeting the group had just been making plans for a rare 'morning out' to discuss the poor spelling test results and plans for remedial action. Beth explained to us that her intention was to make some space (in terms of both time and focus) for discussion of an issue in depth by moving to an outside venue (across school boundaries). This would be the first and (it transpired) the only occasion for such an event and the discussion so far has concerned timings and travel to a local hotel. There is a change of tone from anticipation to awkwardness when Jayne raises a question '*who is in charge?*' of the school in their absence.

**There is a silence and lots of grimacing here. They first mention Sharon, a longstanding member of the teaching staff, who has management points and is paid at the most senior level, but is not a year leader or CL, nor has she any special responsibilities. There are silences and exchanges of eye contact amongst the CLs at this point. They then discuss Celia the IT technician, who the CLs and Ingrid seem to feel is really in charge and likely to be the one remaining calm, taking action and making decisions in any emergency. Beth, who has remained quiet during the initial part of the discussion, points out that Celia cannot really be officially in charge as she is not a teacher; it has to be Sharon. The rest of the group reluctantly agree, but seem uncomfortable with this. Beth points out that "it is only for part of one day!"**

**(Fieldnotes 11.10.06)**

Jayne, the newest recruit to the school is the one that breaks the silence about leadership here. She asks the innocent question, and in doing so exposes a discomfort about who might lead in the absence of the senior team. This discomfort and brief discussion reveals some of the CLs ideas about how a leader should behave (calm, decisive, able to act ) and the tension between this and their evaluation of the performances of other people in the school. They recognize the informal leadership of Celia and indicate reservations about the most senior member of the teaching staff (with the exception of this leadership group). Through her silence, Beth seems to be allowing the rest of the group to briefly explore delegation and leadership here, but she soon closes the door on this discussion with her statement that there is really no choice to be made here in terms of legal requirements for a qualified teacher to be recognized as responsible for the school. The hierarchical order is re-established. The whole discussion took only a couple of minutes, and the issue is closed.

In terms of the 'repair' it seemed that the issue of leadership responsibility was clearly established as hierarchical and linked to formal seniority regardless of the qualities of the person. Beth does not explore the tensions between this legal, hierarchical view of leadership and the informal leadership that the other members of the group allude to. The silence about leadership was resumed and the status quo was maintained. Gheradi calls this 'darning' – '*a practice intended to conceal the damage so that it is forgotten*' (2006:187). In this case, the small start of a tentative exploration of what might be considered leadership qualities was quickly closed down and opportunities to reflect on this forgotten, in the context of the group if not the memory of individuals.

The second example of the surfacing of leadership issues were those raised during the incident with the NQTs (discussed in section 6.32). Here there were issues

concerned with a perceived failure of the leadership structure and the (re) assertion of authority by the headteacher and deputy. Beth and Ingrid asserted their authority jointly, but rather than including Jayne in this enactment of leadership, which might have indicated their visible support for her, she seemed to align herself/to be aligned with her team members and was therefore subjected to the authority of Beth and Ingrid in a very public way. This action, the removal of authority from Jayne, was not explicitly discussed, either before or after the event. Leadership had quickly become followership, and this indicated how even formal and hierarchical leadership authority could be withdrawn through the power of the headteacher.

There were also some connections here between ideas about leadership and the ways that staff were understood to learn at work. Firstly, embedded within this incident is the idea that people learn from mistakes (discussed explicitly in terms of the NQTs and implicitly for Jayne as a leader). The way that these mistakes were made evident to the learners was through public actions identifying failure and consequences rather than through reflection on alternative practices or more private coaching.

Secondly, there was a genre of a leader achieving professional distance from staff within the school. Beth outlined what she perceived as professional distance in a meeting with me towards the end of the year. By this Beth meant social distance from other teachers for her CLs, in particular Nicola and Jayne whom she described as needing to learn this 'lesson': that an easy friendly relationship with the teachers in the team (particularly women) could lead to later problems. In particular Beth implied that a friendly relationship had resulted in difficulty for the CLs in dealing with teachers who were not working properly. For Jayne this had been the two NQTs and for Nicola, attempts to protect her NQT through not making Beth aware of her mistakes. Nicola however, evaluated the idea of professional distance and degrees of social intimacy rather differently.

‘Nicola            *I think that Frances and I are very different people*  
 Ann                *mmmm*  
 Nicola            *I don’t think she, um, she doesn’t communicate as much with her  
 team on a personal level, probably because they’re both males this  
 year, they happen to be. I think they do see her as above them and  
 different from them, whereas (D) and (E) don’t in a way, they would  
 speak to me, they could have a normal conversation with me about  
 something completely unrelated to school.’*

(Nicola interview sections 327 – 329)

She explains the professional distance achieved by Frances as a consequence of leading a team composed of two male teachers and the personal traits of Frances rather than a developed leadership approach. Nicola suggests that she can lead a team perfectly well without developing this type of social distance from her staff.

Even when pressed in the interviews accompanying the concept maps, and during follow up interviews later, the participants were reticent in describing their ideas about leadership, finding it difficult to discuss even knowing it was the focus of the research interview. This varied with the confidence of the participant and Beth and Nicola were clearly the most confident and the most articulate about their ideas. However there were a number of possible explanations for this reticence that included: a lack of confidence in their own role by the CLs and the deputy head, not seeing oneself as a leader, a lack of practice in articulating ideas about leadership and in taking on a new vocabulary of leadership, and the difficulty in expressing a view of leadership very different and potentially critical of the headteacher.

In conclusion, the few opportunities (specific and limited) to talk *in* practice, and even fewer occasions when leaders could talk *about* practice, with each other meant that there were seldom opportunities to articulate ideas about leadership, and this shaped the learning experience for all the leaders at Peony Hill. Learning to lead

became very much an individual enterprise and the evaluative note seemed to be developed silently by each individual. This tacit learning relies on the learner developing their own internally persuasive dialogue, drawing on a personal repertoire of ideas and genres of leadership, but there seemed few opportunities to explore learning through voicing alternative ideas. The headteacher's views were seldom challenged and discussions were focussed on the continued good performance of the children at the school. This institutional talk was important as, from a socially constructed point of view, this was the context that shaped the learning at work for the participants of the study. Clearly, people did talk together during set occasions during the working week and I want to consider two opportunities that were routinely available for group discussion and the implications that these types of discussions had for learning.

## **7.2 Migrating genres and institutional talk**

There were two routine opportunities for groups to talk together, during INSET sessions and SMT meetings. Whilst both of these activities were dominated by institutional talk it became clear that there were movements across the organization in terms of the genres used and that this had implications for the way in which authority, individual voices and the possibilities for the expression of an evaluative note worked in the school. Bakhtin characterizes the composition of the primary genres as encompassing everyday conversation, humour and personal opinion. There were very limited spaces in the school for primary genres to be heard and the silencing of individual voices impacted on more than just leadership learning.

### **7.2.1 INSET meetings – the insertion of teaching genres**

INSET sessions were important in terms of leadership learning as here the participants of the study sometimes led the session themselves, and therefore the sessions were important spaces for the performance of leadership. The INSET sessions were recognised as leadership performance on only three of the 'leading'

maps, but during the year each of the participants was responsible for, and led, at least one of the sessions. The INSET sessions took on a range of formats during the year and these seemed to have different genres of delivery. Some were set up in order to facilitate the completion of in-school tasks, such as the writing of IEP's (Individual Education Plans) and reports, others were venues for the delivery of information and still others focused on teaching practices. Table 8 illustrates the range of activities that took place..

<b>Type of INSET</b>	<b>Taken by</b>	<b>Genre of delivery</b>
Child Protection Training	Outside speaker	lecture
ICT training (20 sessions over the year tied to funding)	ICT technician, CLs, NQTs and other teachers	Practical sessions, demonstrating teaching and school programmes
Curriculum Teams (preparation)	Led by senior team members	Workshops/planning
Specialist subject sessions (Maths, Literacy, Geography, Building Learning Power )	Led by senior team members	Lecture/ demonstration
Curriculum Team Session (feedback)	Led by CL and team	Lecture, planning and demonstration
'inspirational speaker'	Private provider	Lecture
Research groups	Headteacher and researcher	groupwork
Administration sessions – IEP's, marking guidelines, report guidelines, planning etc.	Headteacher	Instructional, administrative activity

Table 8 - INSET activities

Of particular interest during the sessions was the way in which administrative and organizational tasks encroached upon the INSET time and how the genre of classroom teaching became the norm for many of the sessions themselves. For example, during the IEP session not only was there an explanation of this system for

the new staff and NQTs, but the session was used for actually writing individual plans which were then checked by the headteacher.

In the report writing session very strict guidelines were given, alongside a 'model' report, and the headteacher later commented to me that she had returned reports for rewriting to almost every teacher in the school. These are examples that led me to consider this genre of leadership as one of *instructional teacher* as indicated by the way in which the staff reported to the headteacher (at times the other CLs and deputy) as children might show their work to a teacher, and await a response, reminiscent of the IRE/IRF characteristic of teacher talk (Mercer 2004, Rampton discussed in section 4.22). This migration of the genre of *instructional teacher* went even further during the INSET sessions. I want to illustrate this with an extract from my notes of the session given by the deputy headteacher on Mathematics teaching where both the *instructional teacher* and *modelling teacher* genres worked together in the session.

#### **INSET – October 2006**

**People wander in to the classroom usually used for INSET. The tables are laid out in 'cafe table' style. Ingrid is already standing at the front of the class as people walk in, her laptop ready on the side and whiteboard projection system up and running. Some of the staff come in with laptops and some without. I am sitting in a corner on the front left of the classroom with the headteacher, a governor and the year 3 leader Frances.**

**Ingrid starts with Brain Gym. She instructs everyone to stand up and move to music, she leads the movements. We all do this, smiling and looking embarrassed in some cases, confident in others. She instructs as though she has a class of year 5 in front of her.**

**Ingrid then clarifies a registration question from a staff member, then says, 'Now we're on to maths'. She outlines KS2 agreed methods for Peony School (on blue sheet) and introduces the idea of 'pole bridging' - outloud thinking to the group. This is a teaching term that has clearly been used here before, but not everyone seems fully confident with it as there are some murmurs at this point.**



Ingrid then demonstrates teaching methods by modelling how she would teach a sum to a class using number line, and asking individuals their answers (as if they are children). The staff group role play this back to her and still in role she gives praise. After recording the method on the whiteboard Ingrid suggests that the group do this again as a class together – and they do so, still in role.

Beth intervenes at this point with a comment about the parents' perspective – that parents do not understand the teaching methods used and may be using their own, conflicting, methods with children at home. This is a comment rather than an opening for discussion.

Ingrid moves on and asks for a volunteer. Nick gets up and does this brilliantly, (acting a small boy hesitant etc) and thinking out loud. Ingrid steps to the side whilst he does this and lets him have the floor.

Ingrid then asks pairs to pole bridge between themselves in the group (group are still sort of modelling class roles) and there is a short period of group activity on each table. One teacher (Sharon) puts her hand up as she has finished. Ingrid moves around the room checking out with people. Then, as all are talking, uses the Peony Hill way of quieting the class by clapping her hands rhythmically (--!!!) and the staff respond with the reply (-- -- !!) as if they are the children in the class.

Ingrid then moves out of this modelling role to suggest that whiteboards are used to minimise mistakes before moving on to books. She wants to encourage an increase in children listening to each other's explanations and talk (explaining) . She asks if there are any questions and the Governor asks about the number line. No staff have questions.

Ingrid introduces Brain Gym again to wake people up and all get up. Some can't do these more complex exercises (both side of body/brain) and some chat whilst doing. All attempt. The three young male teachers in the corner are joking about a little (not sure if they are in role or just joking!).

Sharon (PE teacher) looks reluctant, and in fact challenges Ingrid with an alternative suggestion for music/movement from PE

Ingrid thanks her neutrally (she is still in teacher role) and goes on to planning.

[The rest of the session included more teacher-led talk and a short session where groups discussed the information given to them. There were questions from three people answered from the front by Ingrid. The session ends with another 'whole group' activity watching a TV maths programme that Ingrid describes as 'inspirational – to inspire you'. ]

(Fieldnotes 4<sup>th</sup> October 2006)

What was notable about this was the way the session was tightly managed through direct instruction and role modelling. There was very little room for discussion either in small groups or by way of response to the delivery of the session by the leader. The small contribution made by Sharon was almost ignored and the only person with the authority to comment, step out of role or interrupt was the headteacher. Role modelling how children might act in the classroom was also observed in other sessions, (BLP, private provider, CL meetings). Talk in practice here was of a particular type that modelled or rehearsed how teachers envisaged that both they and children in the classroom might behave. The dominance of 'teacher-talk' time was commented upon ironically by the headteacher, but this did not materially impact on the way that the session was delivered. The leaders of the sessions demonstrated a monologic authority where the teacher/leader was dominant through teacher talk that either discouraged responses or sought only a 'confirmation' or 'correct answer'. The rest of the adults not only tacitly accepted this dominant form of leadership but actively engaged in their 'follower' roles. They adopted the role of children in a class and were silenced, both literally and metaphorically, and, it seemed, could make little comment on the teaching practice that was being used as an example. Adopting a follower role in this way suggested a compliance with the authority that the group thought the teacher *should* have in the classroom, they were role playing 'good' children here who did not interrupt, followed instructions and achieved the given task, the SMART code in action.

Talk *about* practice was more apparent in some of the other sessions, for example the sessions about target children observations and the curriculum team sessions where the design of activities was discussed. However, these discussions were still largely focussed around the content of the curriculum, the time planning and the resources involved and were in small groups of 3 – 4 teachers, each led by a

member of the SMT. These groups operated more like individual team meetings. Other whole school INSET sessions allowed little talk amongst teachers and the lecture style sessions were almost wholly based around delivery of information rather than discussion and, due to the constraints of school time, there were no formal opportunities for follow up discussion. Following the occasion of evening INSET with the 'inspirational speaker' Nicola commented to me that she had chatted about this in passing to one or two people about it during the school trip the next day. She was sceptical about how the ideas might work in the classroom and staff had not had an opportunity to take this discussion further. There were, of course, possibilities for follow up discussions to take place through informal discussions between staff members, but, as I commented earlier, the social, physical and time boundaries of the school acted to limit this type of interaction. There seemed to be few opportunities for these informal discussions to move into the more formal arena where leadership decisions were made unless they were picked up and followed through by individual sponsors (as Nicola does with the TA issue discussed later).

The instructional and modelling genres structured the way that knowledge became available for the recipients of the sessions. The themes were around the transfer of information (content), through these pedagogic styles which assumed that recipients would do as instructed or shown with few, or no, questions invited. The function of the genre was that of instruction *and* to ensure consistency in the social actions of the participants. The chronotope of the genres orientated the group to the future, school time to come and future lessons/actions. Once again there was no time for reflection or discussion of past practice or even the practice demonstrated during the sessions. As a performance space for leadership the INSET sessions offered each of the leaders (and sometimes other staff) an opportunity to move from 'follower' to 'leader', but this did not substantially change the way that the sessions were run.

### **7.3 Senior Management Team meetings – migrating genres, authority and discussion**

During the SMT meetings the five leaders within the school had a unique opportunity to relate to each other as leaders within the school. Unlike the INSET meetings no other members of staff attended. It was here, if anywhere, that a secure group environment (Kahn 2001) might develop that allowed some reflection on the very new experience of leadership for the two new CLs and some discussion of the way that the school was run – activities clearly focussed upon leadership. However, this meeting was characterized by a particularly *utilitarian* form of institutional talk – a genre that was restricted to issues that were recognisably organizational: the timetabling of special events, the rapid resolution of timetable issues and practical problems and the rapid move to consensus about how to deal with issues concerning parents, NQTs, curriculum, children's movements etc. Episodes characterized by the primary genres of humour, personal conversation or 'off topic' talk were rarely evident and when they did occur were very brief asides. On occasion, role modelling was used to illustrate points (usually verbally, but sometimes non-verbally eg. Beth modelling the teaching of one of the NQTs (discussed in 6.32). Examining the SMT meetings from a dialogic perspective (Marková et al. 2007) means attending to the way that both topic and the interactions between participants are interrelated. This meeting genre seemed to be a composite genre characterized by three particular types of talk, each with different implications for learning. To illustrate this I discuss each type of talk in relation to the SMT meeting of May 07, and the extended fieldnotes are included, with line numbering as an aid to reference, on page 229.

### ***Utilitarian talk***

It was apparent through the discursive interaction that the hierarchy of authority was embedded in the meeting. This authority resided primarily with the headteacher who initiated, gave permission for and closed the topics available for discussion. Looking across the SMT meetings as a genre of institutional talk there were characteristic segments of interaction that demonstrated the hierarchy of authority in operation. After Beth initiated a topic there were quick sequences of responses or clarifications that resulted in clear instructions or answers being given by the headteacher, clearly the undisputed authority. This first talk type, '*utilitarian talk*', is illustrated in the agenda setting extract (above, section 7.1) and is characterised by:

- › *Initiation – minimal responses from one or more members – endmove (agreed action or instruction from BU, new initiation)*

This type of interaction covered many of the practical issues that were resolved during these meetings, for example, dates for homework deadlines and special days, finalizing whole school project guidelines, which groups will be able to use the hall etc. ( SMT Extract; see lines 6 – 9 and 18 – 26 where this type of talk is initiated by Beth and 53 – 61 where other CLs initiate this type of talk in the extract below).

During the year the CLs began to insert themselves into the meetings to ensure that their views or questions were heard. The initiations by the CLs at the start of the year tended to be questions, and these were positioned at the end of the meeting. As the year went on the CLs began to insert themselves into the meeting at an earlier point (illustrated in the extract below), and these insertions were not restricted to questions and *utilitarian* talk but could also introduce topics.

### ***Managed topics***

Topics are defined by Marková et al. as an interaction '*discursively pursued over a sequence*' (2007:134). These were segments of talk where the interaction between participants opened up a discussion and some exploration of the practices within the school, even if this was very brief. This second type of interaction visible in the meetings I characterised as '*managed topics*'

- › *Initiation, topic, responses - discussion, (more than a three turn exchange between two or more individuals) endmove (resolution/consensus)*

These discussions did not explicitly raise the topic of leadership or the way that leadership was performed in the school, but the different positioning of the individuals within the group sometimes revealed a tension in the contrasting ideas about how the school should be managed. Here though, the headteacher tended to use her authority to close down discussion after a limited amount of time and to rapidly make decisions about the issue concerned. Differences in opinion were rarely explored at length. In the extract below, Frances raises the topic of 'new books' at line 32 and the discussion is ended by Beth (lines 40 – 44).

### ***Unresolved issues***

Sometimes both *utilitarian talk* and *managed topics* were left unresolved, either because Beth as headteacher seemed to indicate that she would finish the work off herself, as in the extract (line 16) or when a discussion was unresolved. In the discussion about the responsibility for the NQTs (section 6.31) lines of authority were left unresolved and the topic changed by Beth. The pattern of interaction here was

- › *Initiation, topic, , responses - discussion, (more than a three turn exchange between two or more individuals), endmove (deferral/shelved, new topic)*

This type of talk segment was uncommon as the general pressure was to resolve issues quickly. The topics that were unresolved related to managing people (NQTs,

T.A's, explaining sets and results to parents) and more complex written tasks (reports to parents, IEP's). These unresolved topics resurfaced at intervals during the year as topics for further discussion and as items dealt with through utilitarian talk. However, they were not placed on the agenda as topics in themselves, but raised in response to practical issues as they occurred. Although members of the group were aware of the ongoing issues concerning the NQTs and the TA roles for example, the way that these roles worked was not an issue for discussion in itself.

#### **SMT meeting – May 07**

**The meeting takes place in Ingrid's office and the SMT team of five have now been joined by Gill, who has been appointed as an additional CL in order to free up time for the existing CLs and to take over from Frances when she returns to her teaching role in September 07.**

1 Beth very briefly introduces me to Gill, she doesn't have any choice about my  
2 presence there.

3 Beth starts the meeting by checking that they have all got the document that she  
4 circulated.

5 They nod,

6 Beth says just a few things to sort out before they can have a discussion. She  
7 moves through the issues very brusquely; spelling tests; liaison with the  
8 secondary school, music training offered by the LA (rejected) offers of a visit to  
9 the museum (rejected as in half-term);

10 Beth then halts momentarily on a form for the LA that she has to fill in about  
11 accelerated learning and learning needs (for children), and asks for help from  
12 the group to fill in.

13 Nicola,  
14 Frances

15 Jayne - all make comments,

16 Beth gets irritated with the form and says 'oh I'll guess this' ...

17 Ingrid makes a comment about commitment to BLP and the form is put away.

18 Beth asks who would like to go to an IT conference and offers places - strongly  
19 suggesting that more than one of them should go and that it is an area that the  
20 school (and CLs) need to focus on.

21 No immediate offers to take this up.

22 Nicola offers to read and pass around to the others.

23 Beth then discusses the next whole school homework project, and names the  
24 cities for this and the way that there should be differentiation between year  
25 groups. She reads out the task prepared by Donna (NQT).

26 A couple of questions about when to set and mark answered by Beth.

27 Beth – 'well now onto report comments' (the sheet she has sent out). Before  
28 that she remembers that she has said to me that she will ask if anyone wants to  
29 do the leading from the middle course today. She quickly does so and  
30 Jayne, Nicola and Gill [new CL] all nod.

31 Nicola corrects Beth and says that it is called 'Leadership pathways'.

32 Frances breaks in now raising the issue of 'new books' for the children and  
33 whether they will begin next year with new books or carry on with the current  
34 ones that they have.

35 There is a discussion about this between Beth, Jayne, Frances and Nicola. Gill is  
36 quiet but responds to Beth when asked her opinion.

37 Ingrid positions herself outside the discussion by saying that she can see both  
38 sides of the debate but doesn't feel that she should offer an opinion as she  
39 won't be here next September.

40 The discussion is inconclusive and Beth ends it by asking CLs for their opinion  
41 (but only the three for next year Jayne, Nicola and Gill). The decision is to give



42 new books (not Jayne's view) but to put some older work in, to be discussed  
 43 later on.

44 Beth ends with a final instruction, 'Ask the year teams about how to put a piece  
 45 of work in the new books' (she means ideas for which piece).

46 Ingrid asks about 'special' weeks and PPA time - where should teachers be –  
 47 the rehearsal helpers?

48 Beth indicates yes.

49 Beth advises on how to deal with staff sickness, she gives them how she would  
 50 say this - stressing be positive and not to add with negativity. (not sure where  
 51 this has come from - Jayne beside me is sick herself, looking pale and coughing  
 52 badly)

53 Frances asks a question about reading week

54 Beth decides not to start a new book

55 Nicola asks a question re QCA spelling test booklets, these haven't been  
 56 ordered (HT confirms this)

57 Frances says she will look in her cupboard

58 Nicola carries on this discussion into spelling tests.

59 Beth confirms expectations.

60 Frances then asks a question about homework in the light of these decisions,  
 61 and Beth says to cancel it.

62 Beth then asks if they are happy for her to announce who will be the CLs for  
 63 next year - but not who will be in which team. She has commented to me earlier  
 64 that there is a tension as the final leaving date approaches (31st may) and  
 65 people are unsure about who will be here next year and where (which year  
 66 group) they will be. She cannot answer this in detail yet, but can announce the  
 67 CLs for a sense of security.

68 Jayne asks 'do we know?'

69 Beth clarifies and lists the year groups 'Year 6 (new deputy headteacher ) Year  
 70 5 Gill (replacing Nicola); Year 4 Jayne (she seems to be the only one not  
 71 aware, perhaps she hasn't had discussions with Beth about this as Beth is not  
 72 moving her); Year 3 Nicola (moving from year 6 and Frances no longer doing  
 73 CL).

74 Beth addresses Gill re the year 5 team, and implies that she will be taking this  
 75 over completely after half term. The CLs are silent. I get the impression that this  
 76 is not news to most people, (or possibly that this is not up for debate).

77 Beth 'OK, back to report comments' and she begins to go through the list.  
 78 She has given them all the curriculum descriptors for the reports prior to the  
 79 meeting, and has her copy which she has written on. They go through the  
 80 comments subject by subject, and it is apparent that Frances has already  
 81 adjusted her comments in the light of Beth's notes on the paper - interpreting  
 82 what was wanted and sometimes going further than Beth's comments now.

83       Jayne is changing her comments as they get to a note on them from Beth in the  
84       discussion.  
85       Beth repeatedly emphasises that the comments should be short, more specific,  
86       Nicola, Jayne and Frances continue to make changes in response to wording  
87       suggested by Beth with sometimes input from others.  
88       Beth criticises comments that sound 'a bit teachery' (jargon) and Nicola offers  
89       ideas. Beth defers to Gill in matters of science, although Gill seems a little  
90       reluctant to comment.

During the CL meeting of May 07 the *utilitarian* talk form can be seen where the initiations are made by Frances (lines 53 and 60), Ingrid (line 46) and Nicola (lines 55 and 58) which, alongside Beth's own utilitarian talk (lines 3 – 9 and 18 - 26) prevented her from moving onto the main agenda item, (Children's Report format) by raising other issues at the start of the meeting. Managed topics are initiated by Beth (lines 10 – 16 and lines 77 – 90 and Frances 32 – 44 discussed above). The issue of the information for the LA form seems to be an unresolved topic (lines 10 – 16). The authority of the headteacher is apparent in the closure of each segment of talk, utilitarian talk, managed topics and unresolved issues.

In the last section of the meeting extract (lines 77 – 90) the authoritative voice of Beth is clear ( discussed in section 6.3 and section 7.31). She is both modelling the words to be used in relation to the reports and ratifying and approving the selection of the words put forward by the others in the group. She approves the *exact* words to be used in the reports and the meaning of the word is seen by her as important here. The meaning of each word is the meaning as understood by Beth, and it is this meaning which is taken on by the CLs as they use her chosen words in their year reports.

### **7.3.1 Meetings as a chain of communication – building shared knowledge**

Both resolved and unresolved topics reappeared during the year. Mercer (2000) uses the metaphor of a dolphin to illustrate the ongoing process of identifying and recognising the '*continuous, co-ordinated activities of the school as a whole.*' (2000:174) and this nicely illustrates Bakhtin's notion of the endless chain of

communication, where utterances by each individual relate to both previous utterances (here in the meeting and elsewhere in the school in the intervening period) and the imagined future responses from those in the meeting. Maybin (1996) suggests that it is this '*long conversation*' that enables people to develop shared understanding and that, as the conversation develops, common knowledge is taken for granted by the participants of the group. This common knowledge seemed to be based around the detail and practicalities of organizational life when it was shared through utilitarian talk. However, it was when topics surfaced repeatedly that the participants of the group had an opportunity to voice ideas and develop an evaluative note about leadership, and, importantly, through their internal dialogic voice, to evaluate how their ideas were, or were not, taken up and implemented within the school.

One such topic was that of the TAs and the way that they related to the year teams. All TAs were managed by Beth who also managed their deployment across year teams. This caused difficulties when year leaders were unaware of the time allocation for each TA in terms of their classroom support or the intended activities of the TA. This topic had surfaced as an *unresolved issue* during the first meeting in September, two weeks later TA issues were resolved in a short exchange of *utilitarian talk*. A discussion about TA arrangements took place again in October (*unresolved issue*) and short *utilitarian talk* sections referenced TA activities in November and January. At the end of the year Nicola expressed her view about this unresolved topic in her final interview with me.

'Nicola	<i>that's something that I've flagged up [to BU] today that needs to be looked at for September, I think they feel undervalued</i>
Ann	<i>mm, that they should be more with the year teams</i>
Nicola	<i>especially, like this week and the week after half-term, we're off timetable, so the TAs aren't with the children they're normally with</i>
Ann	<i>mm they're at a loose end</i>

- Nicola            yeah, they're often left in limbo, [ explains how she has allocated TAs for the next two weeks ]*
- Nicola            I've said today [to Beth] already, that I think that they need to be allocated to a year group for next year, and report things to that team leader and be more involved in the team planning and things like special weeks and*
- Ann                yes*
- Nicola            because often they're valuable sources of information on kids that teachers don't see very often, because they take out child for three hours reading, two hours spelling, and work with them in maths they know more about that child than the teacher, and they don't get an opportunity to ever sort of share that really.*

(Nicola interview 2, sections 186 - 197)

The repeated attempts to share knowledge about the movements and responsibilities for TA work did not seem to result in a common knowledge here, perhaps because the headteacher retained control of this area of work. The implications of Nicola's evaluation of this issue are significant in terms of leadership as well as the role of the TA. Nicola's view contrasts with the current practice of the headteacher and implies that this practice is problematic in some way. Allocating responsibility for the TAs to the year groups expands the performance spaces for leadership available to the CLs and diminishes direct people management for the headteacher. This issue, though, was no longer surfacing at the group meetings and Nicola had taken it up individually with Beth. The decision for take-up or rejection of this suggestion, and its evaluation of school practices, continued to reside in the hands of the headteacher and she did not put this issue forward for discussion in the leadership group.

The issue of shared knowledge also seemed connected to the issue of language and communication. Returning to the CL meeting extract, in the second half, from line 77 onwards, the group, with explicit direction and instructions from Beth, engage

in constructing the precise wording of the year and subject definitions that will go into the children's reports. This is one part of the work concerning reports that illustrated how the exact words used in the meetings by Beth were moved across into the texts sent out by teachers of the school. This action becomes clearly authoritative when considering Bakhtin's view of reported speech and authoritative discourse. Throughout the year Beth used both written instructions and verbal suggestions about how to phrase things – direct examples of 'talk' in response to what-to-do and how-to-do questions from the CLs. As I discuss earlier (section 6.3), in doing this Beth expected her voice to be 'clear' and the meaning replicated exactly: the exact words used were important. Here the subjects for the reports were defined at the level of the word by Beth (approving contributions from the group) for each year group in the school. Later written instructions and a pro-forma for the reports were given to all the staff. Finally, as I comment earlier, reports were read and returned to staff if they were considered inadequate by Beth. This move to the *instructional teacher* genre within the meeting was reinforced by authority and the imposition of a monologic voice, not only here, but in the language used by teachers outside the group in their reports. However, as headteacher, Beth also represents the interface of the school with the parents and the outside world as the symbolic leader (Southworth 2003). Her authoritative actions here can be interpreted as a boundary maintenance activity designed to ensure consistency of communication with the outside world. Beth saw this clarity of language as anticipating and forestalling questions, and ultimately closing boundaries to protect staff from parents who might question the reports.

It was possible that this tightening of the instructional teacher genre was as a result of the IEP problem earlier in the year. Here, despite an INSET session and direct instructions from Beth the wording on the IEP's had not been to her satisfaction and the information entered had been incorrect. She had returned them to the year groups, but was exasperated in the CL meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> September that they were

'poor', in the end Beth had completed all the forms herself. Again, the issue of the exact words used was important, and an important part of Beth's emphasis on clarity of communication with parents and other professionals. Shared practices, with implied shared knowledge, were defined at the level of the word and the meaning of these words defined through the authority of the headteacher.

### **7.3.2 The building of a composite meeting genre**

As a genre of institutional talk the meetings were a chain of communication that was rarely broken by what Bakhtin calls the primary genres of humour, irony and the informal talk of everyday life. Were the boundaries around the genre of institutional talk therefore so firmly entrenched that learners became unable to insert their own evaluative note into the dialogue? Certainly direct attempts to challenge the authority of the headteacher in relation to the order that meetings took place, the relationships with NQTs and TAs and the way that the IEP's were written were unsuccessful. The migration of the instructional teacher genre did not disturb the tone of the meeting but seemed to reinforce the utilitarian nature of the discussion. Humour was occasionally evident in asides within the meeting primarily made by Nicola or Beth herself but the instances seemed to have different implications.

Beth used humour as a boundary-building strategy and it was closely related to the institutional genre of the meeting. In particular Beth and Frances had a clear view of parents as problematic and demanding, and Beth dealt with this by tending to close the boundaries around the school (as discussed in chapter 5). Beth maintained her view of parents as problematic throughout the year and actively encouraged others to join with her in this view through the telling of '*atrocious stories*' (Allen, 2001; Dingwall, 1977) about parent behaviour. She began the recorded group session with one such story that illustrates the dilemma between the need to invite parents into

the school and Beth's view of the behaviour of some parents. Beth had suggested that there was a need for parent helpers in the library, but went on to say,

*"Beth although when I took a parent down yesterday, on Monday, whenever it was for my um my reading session, one of them very kindly hammered on the door of their child who was being taught by HR [TA], (.) [laughing] How inappropriate*

*Jayne mmm*

*Beth [laughs]"*

(Recording from Group Feedback meeting sections 25 - 27)

Dingwall (1977) and Allen (2001) both suggest that the telling of such stories helps to define the boundaries between the professional group and others, in this case parents. These stories build '*solidarity and function to constitute occupational groups by underlining their shared experience*' (Allan 2001:88). However, Allen also points to occasions when the stories receive little interactional support, as in the extract above. The story is not taken up by others, there are few indicators of agreement, and Beth seems rather isolated in this telling. This could be interpreted as an unsuccessful attempt to strengthen connections within the group by invoking a particular view of parents. As this view was not shared by others, little overt agreement was indicated, but Beth's view was not openly contested by the CLs or Ingrid. The other members of the group did not recount stories of parent behaviour in this way during my time in the school.

Humour was evident in a comment by Nicola about food in relation to work pressures and the erosion of free time. The use of food as a reward for crossing the boundary between the domains of work and social time seemed to be understood as a mechanism by all staff members. For example, to achieve the moderation of the essays in literacy Beth suggested a 'marking party' where lunch would be provided in the form of sandwiches paid for by the school whilst the year teams (3 and 4)



completed the marking and moderation together in their lunch time. The currency of this boundary crossing was understood in the culture of the school, referred to humorously by Nicola in the group feedback meeting when Beth asks what she can do to relieve the time pressures for the CLs.

*“Beth if I could, obviously if I could wave a magic wand I would get an experienced member of staff who would become a member of our staff. To find somebody like that now would be, really really difficult, is there a way, is there anything that we could do now to make life easier? (.)*

*Nicola [very quiet] a sausage sandwich [the other CLs and IM laugh ]*

*Beth pardon?*

*Beth no seriously, I mean [she carries on with the offer of a supply teacher ]*

(Group Feedback meeting sections 277 - 280)

The group members also declined Beth's repeated offers to 'go out' to talk about school issues that had not been resolved in the CL meetings which seemed to indicate a resistance to spending non-work time discussing school issues. Informal talk either directly prior to the meeting or during the meeting was non-existent, spaces for informal talk between the leaders were rare (as noted in chapters 5 and 6) and these 'in-between' spaces (Solomon et al. 2006) were inaccessible to me as a researcher.

The meetings developed as a composite genre. This meeting genre was composed of a mixture of the three institutional talk types (discussed above), the genre of 'instructional teaching' and the genre of the 'modelling teacher'. There seemed to be well established boundaries around this genre of 'meeting' that rarely allowed the primary genres of humour, irony or personal views (reflection) to be voiced. Any challenges or suggestions were made within the clear hierarchical framework that existed, and the authority of the headteacher was the driving force. The chronotope of this institutional genre, like that of the INSET sessions discussed earlier (p224) was forward looking, the group rarely discussed past events unless, as in the case of the NQTs, it was to resolve a particular problem. There did not seem to be any

reflection during the meetings, either about the role of the leaders or in terms of general school practices. This new group, operating in a new school year, seemed to start afresh, even though four of the group had worked at the school the previous year and two of them for many years. The type of knowledge made explicit here was closely connected to maintaining the function of the school and only moved away from the acquisition and banking model of knowledge during the repeated re-surfacing of unresolved issues. Here there were more opportunities for 'participation' (Sfard 1998) as, over the extended time of the year, the participants were more likely to be able to contribute alternative ideas or suggestions for alternative practices. Mercer (2000) suggests that over time, the sharing of knowledge concerning the practical and functional aspects of the organization will become tacit as all group members come to share their understanding of school processes. It was possible that this would leave space for more participative and reflective discussions within this meeting.

#### **7.4 Developing an evaluative note – becoming a leader**

For all the leaders in the study developing an evaluative note about both their own practices as leaders and making judgements about the practices of others within the organization seemed to be, for the most part, a private experience. In Bakhtin's terms all utterances (verbal or written) have a relationship with genres, and in this case these genres seemed steeped in the traditions of this school and subject to the external boundary making of this organization. The internal boundaries of the school were more permeable and the migration of *teaching genres* to the INSET sessions, an explicitly adult learning context, seemed to work to exclude more reflective discussion. External and possibly alternative ideas about practice that might imply a critique of the modelled best teaching practice going on within the school were excluded. The uni-directional flow of ideas and standards, channelled via the headteacher, was also apparent in the SMT meetings which worked through a

composite genre of institutional talk that also incorporated the teaching genres of modelling and instruction. This meant that learning at work took on a particular form and the expression of ideas took place within this limited range of genres.

Maybin (2005) argues that the evaluative note in language is negotiated in dialogic activity. She suggests that children accumulate

*'social experience of different speech genres [that provide] a set of mediating schemas through which they can connect a piece of reported speech with the particular content themes, interactive patterns and evaluative positions which are generically associated with this way of talking' (Maybin 2005:8).*

Parallels with these professionals in the workplace who are learning to lead can be drawn. They also accumulated social experience through the leadership performances that they were able to establish (Chapters 5 and 6). They developed established interactive patterns through the genres available within the school and the institutional talk embedded within the school. These established patterns shaped the way in which they were able to develop and voice the evaluative positions from which they presented themselves as leaders with a particular evaluative stance.

Attempts to break away from these established genres of communication, via humour, critique, reflection or trying to approach leadership differently (the issue of personal distance) required a certain level of confidence. In taking a position as a leader these evaluations carried a personal risk in terms of the potential rejection of the ideas by the headteacher, the serious consequences if the high standards of the school were perceived to be put at risk and the pressure on time/space that seemed to exclude alternative ways of acting. Confidence in each leaders' own evaluative note developed over time and led to actions that could be called assertiveness in leadership.

#### **7.4.1 Different levels of confidence in developing an evaluative note**

In the small arena of this primary school, self confidence in a leader's evaluative note was inevitably measured against the baseline of the headteacher's confidence, which was well developed and the product of 10 years successful leadership (as measured by school performance and OfSTED). As leaders developed their evaluative note about the practices within the school there was an implicit challenge to the decisions made and practices established by the headteacher. In some cases this was allowed (for example when Nicola requested the leadership of year 3 for the following year in order to extend her experience), but there was a possibility of conflict when increasing confidence in a CLs evaluative note contrasted with the headteacher's viewpoint as illustrated by Nicola's comments about the role of TAs (section 7.31).

Frances, although having what might be perceived as limited development opportunities, experienced these as positive and acceptable. Her evaluative note about leadership was clear: leadership was not for her and she did not enjoy the aspects of leadership that meant that she had to tell people difficult things. Her position as an experienced member of staff did allow her to express an evaluative note in discussions (Section 6.21), and perhaps her stated position as not seeking formal leadership role for the future meant that this was not interpreted as criticism in the same way that comments by others might be. Her focus on the BLP programme offered her a continuing informal leadership role which she was keen to maintain, and here the emphasis was firmly on children's learning in the classroom.

In contrast, Jayne's experience of rather difficult NQTs, interventions by Beth and Ingrid in the management of these NQTs and the lack of take-up of some of her ideas by other CLs seemed to have prevented Jayne from developing a further degree of confidence in her own evaluative note than she had at the beginning of the year. At the end of the year she commented to me that she was still unsure of

her role in some respects concerning the NQTs as they went '*straight to Beth*'. She was also disheartened as she felt that she had put a lot of support work in with the NQTs and that as both the NQTs in her team were leaving this effort had been wasted.

This illustrates how the perception by the participants of their experience of developing and taking up an evaluative position was also linked to performance spaces and the evaluation of this space as expanding or diminishing. Ingrid's evaluation of her performance space and development opportunities as diminishing at this school contrasted with her evaluation of her own practice as competent and ready for headship. This dissonance, together with an opportunity, was the trigger for her to move on.

#### **7.4.2 Transporting experience and movement across boundaries**

Boundaries around the organization again became salient when considering how the leadership experiences were evaluated by the participants in terms of their potential for developing leadership spaces and their future plans. Perhaps it was inevitable that Ingrid, perceiving her leadership space as diminishing and having achieved the NPQH, would chose to leave the school and obtain a headship, giving her the opportunity for leadership space that she desired. In her interview she implied that she would use a style that was more distributed and 'trusting' of staff; an approach to leadership that included more delegation. This was apparent as a contrast in the light of her comments about the way that the meetings within the school operated:

*'Ann do you think that group's ever had time to sit down and discuss how people see the school going and what they want, do you think? [...]*

*Ingrid I think at the moment we have a very 'junior' senior team and therefore a lot of the onus goes back to me and the head, we are, we could burn out. I have said this, we could burn out, and that's not going to be good, we've got to*

delegate more. I think that's the way forward, trust the staff because they care, yes they might make mistakes, we've all done it, but there's things we've just got to let go a little bit, all of us

Ann yes, so what do you think could happen there, that isn't yet happening there?

Ingrid (4) [laughs quietly] urm, I don't know [laughs] I know, I know what's happened before and I think that'll probably happen again, but I'd like to think it would change, but I don't think it will.

Ann so do you think [the group] operates more as, shall we say, an information, cascading meeting

Ingrid yeah, yes, (())

[ section omitted on moving day of meeting]

Ann in terms of how those two meetings work together, how do you think your year leading meeting works in terms of, you know relating to that other meeting and relating to the school

Ingrid I think a lot of it is information I'm saying this is going to happen, this is going to happen. Its a tight meeting anyway and I do feel discussion is the one element that's not given as much room as it should be, but I think a lot, it wouldn't matter even if we did discuss it 'cos the decisions been made.

Ann mmm, so it would be hard to change that round in terms of ideas coming upwards

Ingrid yes, [starts to compare with previous school where decisions were made by team leaders]

(Interview Ingrid – 109 – 130, my emphasis)

This evaluation of the way that she would prefer the school to operate was expressed in the privacy of our individual interview, and Ingrid clarified on a number of occasions that this should be private and not fed back to the headteacher at that point. Later it became clear that the interviews took place just as she was applying for a headteacher post in another school, but that this was unknown to other staff at the time. The way that Ingrid dichotomized her experience of leadership between the two schools is referred to in section 6.22, and her evaluative note was clearly expressed as trying to find a middle way between the instructional style of Beth and the very 'hands off' delegated style of her previous headteacher.

Ingrid 'you take the best of both don't you and make the ideal.'

(Ingrid - interview section 76)

During her reflection on the year with me, Beth was concerned with the issues of boundaries and relationships with staff. She had appointed two key staff members for the next year: Gill, the CL who had been in post since Easter and Melony the new deputy head (to start in September). During our conversation of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007 she commented that she

**hopes to get on with her new deputy (Melony) and that Melony will be able to use good judgement and challenge BU, but having thought through the problems, not just for the sake of it. Melony brings Maths and PE as specialist areas, but these aspects were less important than her ability to separate professional and personal hats and to take initiative.**

(Beth, Interview notes – not recorded)

This comment referenced her view that the main problems in the year had been concerned with relationships, those between the NQTs and the rest of the staff, the CLs in particular, and the relationship between herself and Ingrid which had deteriorated as the year progressed. She commented that she had learnt that she should not 'let things fester' or be swayed by others in her decisions (Beth 10.07.07). The idea that leaders should learn '*professional distance*' was one which she reprised in relation to the rearrangement of team members for the following year (including a male staff member in each to balance the issue of women's friendships which she perceived as problematic and the root of some of the NQT issues) and in terms of her own discussions with Nicola. She described to me how she and Nicola differed in relation to praising staff for the SATS results.

**Beth commented that she had an argument – she rephrased this immediately as a 'professional disagreement' with Nicola over this. Nicola felt Beth should be more praising to the staff about the results, but Beth had only rated them as OK to staff in terms of Maths as the 'value added' score was low. Beth went on to suggest that Nicola does not understand the bigger picture of value added in relation to this affluent area, something that she will need to appreciate if she is to become a school leader.**

(Beth, Interview notes 10<sup>th</sup> July 06)

Beth was opening the school boundary to new ideas and practices by bringing in new staff, but the people invited in were carefully selected and she had clear expectations about the way that they would act. The results of their presence and interactions once in the school were an unknown quantity, but it seemed that Beth's evaluation about the type of leadership required had changed little over the year. Strong leadership decisions, the value for professional distance and clear boundaries between staff members and rapid resolution of problems were her intended focus for the year to come. The presence of two new members in the leadership group meant that 'common knowledge' about the organizational elements of the school would have to be made explicit again in order to make this knowledge available to the new staff members.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

Leadership as a topic for discussion rarely surfaced in the school and when it did this was in response to a particular problem or issue and the discussion tended to be brief and oriented to problem solving. Spaces for adult discussions were few and the formal spaces of INSET and the SMT meetings tended to be settings where institutional talk reinforced the monologic authority of the headteacher and emphasized leadership as an individual enterprise. The migration of the genres of instructional teacher and modelling teacher from the classroom to the INSET and SMT meetings acted to inhibit the expression of individual commentary, reflection or even the primary genres of humour, irony and personal comment. The headteacher had a clear leadership style and views of her own. The other participants of the study did develop their individual evaluative notes about leadership, even if this seemed to take place largely outside the school and through personal reflection, an internal dialogue of the self. For those learning to lead, expressing their own evaluative note was, however, not easy, as this could bring them into direct conflict with the way that the headteacher felt the school should be run in terms of staff



relationships and school priorities. It seemed that levels of confidence in oneself as a leader were important here, and ultimately a high level of confidence as a leader could trigger movement across boundaries to another school.

**Synthesis and discussion**

## Chapter 8

### Learning to lead in a restrictive environment

In this concluding chapter I first synthesise my findings in a discussion which illustrates how my conceptual framework of boundaries, spaces and genres helps us to understand how these particular leaders learned to lead within the workplace. I review the initial research questions (page 5) which addressed:

- learning through discussion
- the opportunities and limitations for learning in the workplace
- access to ideas about leadership
- the way in which organizational boundaries impacted on learning for new and established leaders.

Workplace learning did seem to be connected to the available repertoire of genres and way that school boundaries were constructed. This relationship between genres and boundaries shaped both the possibilities for individuals to voice an opinion and the range of languages and ideas that they were exposed to.

In the second part of the chapter I consider how my conceptual framework relates to the expansive - restrictive continuum for workplace learning as developed by Fuller and Unwin (2004) and the implications that this might have for considering learning in workplaces more generally. I then go on to tentatively explore how organizational genres might relate to knowledge in the workplace and the way that it is made accessible to learners. In the last section of the chapter I reflect upon the research and consider both the limitations of this study and the possibilities for further work that might adopt and develop this framework.

### 8.0.1 Learning through discussion - dialogue and silence

The ongoing development of an evaluative note about leadership, is, as Maybin (2005) reminds us, a '*double-edged driving force*'. This force simultaneously enables an individual to adopt a position in relation to the world around them and is heard in the expression of their position within that world as they interact with others. Any evaluative note, although essentially an individual expression, is developed through dialogue and the dialogic relation with others. Locating learning as being evident in this evaluative note is closely linked to the element of addressivity (Bakhtin 1986, Holquist 2002), the issue of who is being addressed and the anticipation of the response of the other. Through this anticipation, response, and counter response we are able to evaluate the views of others, compare them with our own views, and adjust or strengthen our own views over time. But, as I argue throughout this thesis, there are limits to the spaces available for discussion and the discourses that make up the heteroglossia are not all equally accessible. Learning is therefore bounded in particular ways in the workplace.

My study showed that the way that boundaries of time and space were constructed in the school meant that leaders had limited opportunities to talk with each other. In particular there were few opportunities for extended exchanges focussing on or discussing leadership practice. Using Gheradi (2006) to separate talk in practice from talk about practice it became apparent that talk about practice was infrequent and, with the exception of talk generated by the research process itself, talk about practice was seen as problematic because it arose through a breakdown of the normative social order. Only discussing leadership practice on occasions of breakdown meant that a particular addressivity was adopted, focussing on the management of responsibility and accounting for individual actions to the headteacher. In turn this meant that the development of an evaluative note about leadership practice was oriented towards the way that control, authority and problem resolution were dealt with.

Including silence as part of the dialogic relationship for participants was important in two respects: in the analysis of the dialogue and in directing my attention to the learning taking place through observations and role modelling. Silence in dialogue can be understood here on the two levels that Bakhtin (1986) identifies. The silence that is a 'turn' or response in a conversation which can be interpreted as an evaluative stance (the disagreement with the atrocity stories in section 7.33) or the silence that is the role of a third party listening to and silently evaluating the discourse/actions of others. Whilst both these types of silence were evident in the study, it is the second, the general discursive silence and lack of talk about practice, that was significant for this research. This particular silence suggested that centrifugal forces became what Maybin (2001) terms '*extreme*' and closely '*associated with [...] "internally persuasive discourse", which is expressed in everyday informal conversations and people's reflections on their experience, within inner dialogues.*' (Maybin 2001:65) As there were few opportunities for informal conversations about leadership, and reflection took place silently for the most part, this '*inner dialogue*' of discourses about both leadership and learning became a private experience and learning to lead seemed to be an individual rather than shared experience for the participants of the study.

This general discursive silence led to interpretations and evaluations of the observed and enacted performances of leadership which were individualized within the workplace. The reliance on the genre of modelling (instruction and showing) meant that language was used in particular ways that tended to inhibit the possibilities for individuals to voice an evaluative note or commentary. For example, one way in which modelling was made more specific was through the genre of instructional teacher talk, direct instructions both verbally and in writing from Beth to her staff members. Embedded within these genres were the hierarchical power structures of the school established through history and legislative structures. The

dialogue here was of a particular nature as the headteacher made the '*authoritative utterances that set the tone*' (Bakhtin, 1986:88), which was one of target-driven performance, organizational consistency and uniformity of performance.

This authoritative tone was established by the headteacher through her role, instructional/individualistic style of leadership and the ways that she selected particular influences and drew them into the school. In terms of developing their own evaluative note through dialogue, discussion opportunities for the other four leaders were limited. However this did not mean that the participants of the study were unable to develop an evaluative note, just that talk about leadership and learning to lead was seldom visible in the discourses that existed within the school. My activity as a researcher initiated discussion about leadership and learning on specific occasions. Here the expression of an evaluative note was facilitated by the research interviews and conversations (often in a private setting) and the group discussion of the concept maps completed for the research. In contrast, my presence at the SMT meetings did not seem to create a space for discussion; the pressures of school time took priority. The boundary between school time and private time that allowed for reflection was well maintained and seldom broken.

Within the school the authoritative discourse of the headteacher became the centripetal force, in relation to which the other leaders developed their evaluative note and were more, or less, in tension with. It was her language *in practice* which was held up as the authoritative model, and this was instructional, prescriptive and direct. Her leadership seemed to imply a prescriptive and very narrow form of instructional leadership as understood by Hallinger (2003;2005), Southworth (2002) and Webb (2005). This version of instructional leadership could be seen as one which '*focuses only on teacher behaviours which enhance pupils' learning*' (Southworth 2002:77) and Beth directly prescribed a specific range of teaching approaches. The broader form of instructional leadership referred to by Southworth

attends to the development of an organizational culture focussed on teaching and allows '*shared instructional leadership*' (Hallinger 2005; Southworth 2002). At Peony Hill however, the leadership was top-down and decisive; the clear vision, focus on improving standards and the quality of education for the children very much led by the headteacher. The language of leadership in practice here was non-negotiable and alternative discourses of leadership such as distributed or shared leadership did not seem to exist within the school. The organizational repertoire of genres available to those learning to lead within the workplace seemed to be limited to those already established by the headteacher.

Even so, the position of the headteacher herself was a difficult one as she faced both outwards towards the external world and inwards towards the school staff as she evaluated the external discourses about leadership and education that were available. This applied in particular to policy from central government, and Beth acted as a conduit for these discourses within the school – sometimes reinforcing her centripetal position of authority and sometimes evaluating government policy decisions critically. When making a critical evaluation Beth was able to position herself as a centrifugal force in relation to the national picture with her own evaluative voice and was able to align the other CLs with this position by way of her authority and centripetal power within the school. This, however, as Webb (2005) and others suggest was within the constraints of the government performance targets, policy and legislative changes. As Hartley (2007b:181) points out '*Hierarchical forms of accountability remain*', the headteacher being subject to the accountability of government policy and legislative measures and ensuring general compliance with these measures, even when evaluating them from a critical perspective. Instructional leadership here implied not only a narrow focus on children's achievements but also clear instructions to staff members about policies and legislation as they applied to the work of the school.

### 8.0.2 Opportunities and limitations for learning in the school

Leadership development possibilities in terms of placements, discussions workplace opportunities and engaging in NCSL or other programmes did, very much as Rhodes and Brundrett (2006) claim, reside in the '*hands of the headteacher*'.

Concerns that '*leadership development activities might take teachers away from essential work with children*' (2006:281) were echoed by Beth in the light of the drive to ensure a good school performance in terms of children's SATS results. Despite this all the participants in the study were, in different ways, actively engaging with debates about educational leadership, Frances choosing not to pursue a formal leadership role, Jayne planning to explore a variety of leadership experiences, and Nicola from a focussed approach to undertaking the NCSL's programme for school leaders. Beth as the external face of the organization was exposed to an almost overwhelming array of policy debates, local initiatives and professional debates. She dealt with the heteroglossia of educational leadership by being selective about the initiatives that she took on and by developing a hierarchy of trust (section 5.3) in terms of the comments of others about these initiatives. She was often sceptical about local authority or new government initiatives, and her evaluative note about leadership debates was shaped by this.

In this research about workplace learning the learners are adults, but in a relationship with the headteacher based upon authority and power differentials. There were a number of aspects here: the idea of the headteacher as the purveyor of an authoritative discourse and yet also as the developer of future leaders, the headteacher as an evaluator of wider discourses and yet as a centripetal force in terms of a leadership discourse within the school. Managing the boundary with wider discourses meant that opportunities to attend external courses were closely controlled by the headteacher and, during this year, a privilege available only for the SMT members. Whilst the headteacher did not actively oppose the NCSL



programmes that Ingrid and Nicola had started prior to joining the school, the training that she offered to sponsor during this year was related to teaching (BLP, IT training, MFL training and PHSE teaching strategies) rather than that identified as leadership training. Beth had been unable to release Nicola to attend Fast Track training during the autumn term and it was Nicola, together with two other CLs, who strongly requested that they should attend the Leadership Pathways programme together during the next year. It was only a few days before the application deadline that Beth agreed to this (Nicola Interview 2). It seemed that both individual and national needs for learning to lead (discussed in section 1.1.) were secondary to the local organizational needs as assessed by the headteacher.

As headteacher, Beth clearly saw herself as developing leaders within the school (section 5.3) and having a conscious pedagogical intent. This could be seen as an authoritative dialogical discourse (Matusov 2007) (allowing short discussions of leadership before closing the topic, section 7.11), however this type of discussion occurred on very few occasions in relation to the authoritative discourse of her instructional leadership. In both cases the authority of the headteacher was apparent in both the initiation and closure of discussions, not only about leadership but all aspects of school life. Her authority and priorities both restricted opportunities for discussions and set the limits for them. Whatever the position adopted by the headteacher, the relationship of the other developing leaders to the headteacher's authoritative discourse was not one of uncritical acceptance, but it seemed that this was rarely discussed with her. When Beth rephrases '*argument*' to '*professional disagreement*' (section 7.42) she is suggesting that a professional can discuss alternative views about leadership in relation to the school's position (in relation to SATS results) and in channeling an assessment of that position to staff members. However, her reiteration that Nicola '*does not understand*' the school's position in relation to interpreting policy and performance measures firmly establishes her own

interpretation of the situation as the authoritative one, and Nicola as not yet a professional.

Whilst the opportunities available in terms of training and workplace discussions were important, the way in which the participants evaluated these opportunities in relation to their own career aims was also significant (sections 5.21 – 5.24). How this evaluation contributed to the learning of an individual, their ongoing *'becoming'* (in terms of this research the process of learning to lead), was harder to establish. In this study the very restricted spatial arenas where the performance of leadership and the voicing of leadership ideas were possible meant that within the workplace learning and becoming a leader was a privatized and an individual responsibility. Learning from courses, external contacts and discussion tended to be individualized rather than discussed between group members.

This evaluation of the opportunities offered, and the experience of those taken, can be seen as contributing to an inner dialogue and the development of an individual's internally persuasive discourse. This is not a stable entity as it is in continuous relationship with experience, practice and other discourses and both evaluates the external world and is subject to continuous internal evaluation. Farmer (1998) explains that this is a:

*'discourse that ranges freely among other discourses, that may be imaginatively recontextualized, and that is capable of engaging other discourses in dialogue'* (1998:xix).

Whilst one cannot know or see an individual's internally persuasive discourse how then is it evident to others and the researcher? The evaluative note which both creates and is created by this internally persuasive dialogue becomes apparent in the talk and comments of the participants of the study. Here the evaluative note of individuals is tested against the discourses of others and is strengthened, adjusted,

challenged and grown as part of the internally persuasive dialogue about what it means to be a leader for each of the individuals. During the research interviews this evaluative note was elicited by the researcher. During school life this was illustrated by the surfacing of challenges or commentary about the school direction; the raising of topics for discussion in the CL meetings and the raising of issues with Beth herself, even where this was unsuccessful.

### **8.0.3 Drawing on the heteroglossia of leadership**

The external debate and heteroglossia of leadership can not be simply characterized by suggesting that central government initiatives are centripetal in character and that alternative discourses are centrifugal. A more sophisticated view of the centripetal nature of leadership is needed which takes into account the long trail of history and the complexity of the often contradictory layers of policy changes which have impacted on educational leadership. There are also the competing discourses of religious, independent and alternative forms of educational leadership that exist within the UK (eg. Grace, 1995 discussing Catholic schools; Woods et al., 2005 on Steiner Schools; the Independent Schools community). In addition to this, as I noted in Chapter 4, there is a range of cultural discourses which represent normative and alternative views of educational leadership within the wider UK culture. Individual experiences may or may not challenge these views, or the fictional relating of leadership and education through books, films and media, but it seems likely that individuals will be aware of at least some of these discourses.

Rather than being understood as centripetal, government policy could be characterised as one stratum of the heteroglossia, reflecting a number of social languages within which both the discourse of modernization and distribution, and that of individualistic and 'hero' headship exist. One part of this social language of political commentary and policy represents the centripetal and centralizing

influences that run through imposed policy even as it tries to modernize and challenge an older discourse of educational leadership, disturbing the traditional authority of the headteacher and her sole power and control of the school. This illustrates the tensions and contradictions within Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia very well, and this tension was played out in the local situation. In this school, ideas about distributed leadership were resisted by the headteacher and, whilst she had a number of reasons for this (the new staff group, her own reluctance to delegate), her interpretation of leadership as ensuring quality, standards and the improved performance of children in relation to government targets called upon an older centripetal discourse of primary headship as the sole authority within a school. It seemed that in order to comply with one aspect of government policy, the focus on standards and performance, another view of policy was rejected through the call to an older perception of leadership. This was not a position that she took up alone. Government moves to improve the performance of poorly performing schools use the terminology of individualistic super-heads, and interventions to replace headteachers of failing schools, even as they direct the NCSL to investigate 'new models' of leadership (Remit 10<sup>th</sup> April 07):

*'By 2011, 150 more National Leaders of Education – outstanding super-heads with past experience of turning schools around – will work alongside Heads to help solve problems at the schools' (DCSF 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008)*

What seemed significant about the range of ideas that the participants in the study drew upon was the notable absence of the language of 'leadership learning' as discussed by the NCSL. Participants found it difficult to describe their own, or other, leadership styles (Ingrid in section 5.3) and it was towards the end of the year that I introduced and directly asked about the terms '*instructional leader*' (Beth interview 10<sup>th</sup> July) and '*distributed leadership*' (Nicola interview 2) that had not been mentioned. The findings of this study seemed to suggest that the range of ideas drawn upon to talk about leadership during the research mainly emerged from

common sense ideas about leadership and learning and the organizational repertoire of genres relating to *instructional teaching*, *modelling teacher* and the secondary genres of institutional talk that characterised this particular school. One exception to this was the adoption of the '*five year*' time frame of career development which seemed to be shared by the participants and identified in the various NCSL programmes.

#### **8.0.4 Boundaries, spaces and learning**

Whilst there was a very clear individualistic model of leadership within the school, even if this was not discussed, the boundaries around the school meant that access to alternative discourses (Bakhtin's heteroglossia) constrained opportunities for leadership debates in various ways for the different individuals. The language of leadership and that of learning is heteroglossic in the most dynamic of ways – both terms are contested, interpreted and applied to suit specific circumstances. An individual did not have to be planning to become an educational leader to be exposed to debates and opinions about what educational leadership should be and what learning should look like. Reflection on one's own experience as a child at school sits side by side with debates in the national press, political debates and those within the profession about the nature of educational leadership. Talking to the participants in the school made it clear to me that there were various levels of engagement with these debates, levels of exposure to the heteroglossia, that were managed by the individuals with their career goals and views of learning in mind. The boundaries existing in terms of time and spaces within the school and people's personal lives outside school influenced the way that engagement and exposure to these debates took place.

Boundary-crossing activities are considered to be expansive learning opportunities. In my study I have tried to look at the nature of different types of boundaries and the way that they relate to learning for both individuals and groups. The closure of

physical boundaries, and the reification of time as a boundary structuring movement and interaction, were significant in terms of the opportunities available to learners. The school's semi-rural position, at a distance from meetings and training in the local authority, did matter if individuals were hoping to develop networks and to attend twilight training sessions in their own time. The firm social boundaries and clear distinctions between the roles within the school, in combination with the firm boundaries placed around school time, had a significant impact on the way in which learning could take place.

The findings suggest that, alongside opportunities for crossing both external and internal boundaries, it is the nature of the spaces available for performance and discussion within an organization that are important. As Beach (1999; 2003, section 2.1) points out, it is the nature of the activities on both sides of the boundary that are significant in terms of the possibilities to act and to talk. He suggests that it is more fruitful to consider boundary crossing as a transition and to examine how particular types of transitions might relate to learning. It is possible to think about the way that transitions took place in relation to roles: the consequential transition from teacher to leader for the three CLs. This transition was a lateral one, movement in a single direction, where the role of teacher is seen as preparation for the role of leader. This transition had been rapid and abrupt for two of the leaders (Nicola and Jayne) and there were questions about the extent that their teaching history had prepared them for their current role as CLs and Year Leaders who would be assessing the teaching practice of others. There were also collateral transitions, where people moved back and forward between roles, in the simultaneous undertaking of work and formal learning activities (eg. linked to NCSL, the local PHSE and BLP programmes). It is this type of activity in particular that is seen to give leverage to learning at work through the immediate application of ideas to experience. The movement between

the CLs' own classroom and their year leadership responsibilities could also be seen as an ongoing collateral transition.

The relationship between these lateral and collateral transitions differed according to the boundaries in play. The collateral transitions that took place across the external boundaries of the organization seemed to play a minor role in terms of learning for leadership as they were not directly related to this learning and did not seem to include reflection about the new roles undertaken. The learning seemed to be compartmentalized and private, learning for individuals taking place in their own time and outside the organization. The collateral transitions that took place *within* the organization between the teaching and leading roles were significant for the way in which the role boundaries of the different roles were managed by the participants. In Ashforth et al.'s (2000) terms, the physical boundaries of the teacher's individual classroom supported 'buffering' between the roles of teacher and leader that, for Frances in particular, generated a space where the CLs could consider themselves as expert practitioners rather than novice leaders. Internal boundaries also came into play here as, despite a lateral transition from teacher to leader, many aspects of leadership activity were retained by the headteacher, and, as leaders, the CLs and the deputy were often followers of the headteacher's instructional style.

Examining the learning of the head teacher and deputy as transition clearly took a different form, and initially fit that of an encompassing transition, which fits into Beach's specific example for this where '*experienced teachers [are] responding to new education reform initiatives*' (1999: 117). This interpretation is problematic as it seemed that the closed boundaries around the school acted as a defence to resist reforms rather than to embrace them. When policy initiatives and legislative requirements imposed changes, such as the introduction of TLR posts, the headteacher worked hard to mediate the changes to fit in with the school routines and culture (CLs retained the 'old' role, and title, of year leader alongside their TLR

designation). The deputy head had taken on the initiative of gaining an Artsmark award for the school, but she had been very specific in stating that she thought this was possible because the school was *already* doing the activities rather than as a programme to improve arts or to initiate changes. This places the Artsmark initiative within an accountability and performance framework rather than as a learning initiative to change practice across the school.

The tendency here, to close school boundaries in relation to external pressures, reprises Ashforth et al. (2000) and Goldring's (1997) comments about using boundaries as a buffer to reduce external demands, for example, the formal procedures to manage parent communications. The power of the headteacher was also important here as in her gatekeeping role she was able to select the information which she then channelled into the organization. Goldring comments:

*'By controlling information, environmental leaders protect the organization from stress and other external interferences (1997:295).*

Even though the school was unable to close organizational boundaries in relation to national policy and performance targets through careful filtering and by remaining in control of the decision making *within* the school the headteacher retained her power and authority. One area where it seemed that she retained control and closed boundaries was that of learning opportunities for the staff within the school, including those learning to lead. Beth seemed to recognise this when she commented that she would like to delegate more (Section 6.23), but at the same time reflected that there had been few opportunities for her to allow others to '*make mistakes*'.

Assessing the external environment as threatening and the internal environment as vulnerable meant that the firm boundaries and buffering activities remained in place. These firm boundaries were reflected internally in the clear hierarchical structure and firm boundaries between roles for the leadership team. Any vulnerability was met with the response of power being returned to the centre, the headteacher and



the centripetal position of the headteacher being strengthened (as in the NQT, TA and IEP examples).

## 8.1 Restrictive boundaries – immersive learning

Using an ethnographic method enabled me to gather detailed information to assess the possibilities for learning using Fuller and Unwin's (2004) expansive – restrictive learning continuum for workplace learning. In many ways the school was placed firmly at the restrictive end of the continuum. There were limited opportunities for boundary crossing to external courses and an immediate transition between teaching and leading roles with expectations of competency from the start. Innovation was not perceived as important and there was a uni-dimensional top-down view of expertise. More specifically, applying this framework to schools, Fuller and Unwin (ibid) and Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2005, and in Evans et al. 2006) developed the framework to assess learning environments for teachers. Using this framework also locates Peony Hill as towards the restrictive end of the continuum, with prescribed and standardized approaches to teaching imposed upon staff, few opportunities for boundary crossing unless connected with a change of job and teacher learning dominated by government and school agendas. (Evans et al 2006:53).

I suggest that identifying the way that *particular* boundaries act as restrictive for learning is important. Different boundaries have different implications for the way that individuals are able both to access a variety of experiences and alternative discourses and to rehearse and voice their own evaluative note in relation to leadership issues within the organization. In this school the closure of the physical boundary and the schools semi-rural position, at a distance from meetings and training in the local authority, did impact on external connections and training. The closed social boundaries and clear distinctions between roles within the school

limited the ways in which those becoming leaders could share their ideas and experiences with each other. The firm boundaries around the genres of school time, modelling and institutional talk acted in concert with other boundaries to shape the ways in which dialogue and observational learning could take place.

It was this combined closure of the various boundaries within and around the school that created a restrictive learning environment, yet this was seen as a protective measure by the headteacher to mitigate against stressful conditions and to facilitative fast, *immersive* learning for the staff of the school. The headteacher was mindful of the performance agenda for schools and her priority was were to ensure rapid and effective learning by her staff, in particular those new to the demands of teaching and leading, to maintain the school performance against the external measure of SATS results. The 'one school year' time frame for this (prior to the next round of external assessments for pupils) seemed to drive the need to bring new staff rapidly in line with the headteacher's perception and expectations of teaching performance. This boundary creating and maintaining activity by the headteacher fits with what McWilliam and Perry (2006) describe as '*risk-aversion*' tendencies of education leaders which occur when they are:

*'under increasing pressure to prioritize image, reputation, and narrowly-defined performance at the expense of investment in a creative, open, and risk-taking learning environment.'* (2006:106)

Fuller and Unwin (in Evans et al. 2006) are not suggesting that learning does not take place at the 'restrictive' end of their framework, but suggest that a more expansive learning environment could enhance teacher learning, particularly through boundary crossing activities (Evans et al. 2006:56). What, then, were the implications for an organization that prioritized this type of fast and immersive learning? It seemed that there were a limited range of learning modes in play, direct instructions and modelling being viewed as the most direct ways of achieving a

common understanding of the school processes. Learning seemed to be understood as acquisition here (Sfard 1998) prior to effective participation in the school workforce, and what was to be acquired seemed to be the 'Peony Hill' way of working. Alternative viewpoints or suggestions tended to be suppressed through the inhibiting of arenas for reflective discussion or even space for problem solving discussion. The type of knowledge that seemed to be important was what Eraut (1994, 2004) describes as '*process knowledge*' – specifically the acquisition of information relating to the local cultural situation and the resources available. It could be argued that the headteacher was attempting to make the tacit knowledge of the school workplace explicit for the new members in order that they could work more effectively. Even if this was so, this '*process*' learning seemed to be disconnected and isolated from and discussion of theories of teaching or learning for children, and from theories of leadership for those learning to lead. The lack of discussion, giving few opportunities for questions and assumptions about learning through observation of others seemed to result in an expectation that individuals would make the connections between what they had learned, theory and workplace practice independently and in private.

There were problems with this approach. The ways that individuals responded to this type of learning were unpredictable, despite the clear and specific instructional style of the headteacher. Even though Beth both saw herself, and was acknowledged by others, as a role model, the complexities of role modelling as discussed by Gibson (2004) and Singh et al. (2006) (section 4.21) were clearly illustrated. Not all modelled behaviour was regarded as positive and to be emulated. The other leaders would not necessarily be taking up this role model of instructional leadership, but as they had limited exposure to other possible models of headship, and Beth had a successful record at the school, it seemed likely that some elements of her performance would be taken on board as a model that could successfully deal with the policy and environmental demands on a school.

It seemed important to distinguish between the way that the school was unable to close organizational boundaries in relation to the national policy and performance agendas, but was able to retain control and close boundaries around the school as a learning environment for adults. This closure of the boundaries which were under local control can be seen as a protective and defensive measure, both in terms of protecting the position of the school in performance tables and of protecting new staff and those new in leadership roles from what was perceived as a threatening environment. What this also seemed to imply was that short term organizational goals were prioritized at the expense of longer term goals to develop leadership, and that privileging these short term goals meant that longer term learning for individuals was privatized and often took place outside the physical boundaries of the school. Learning to lead here fit with Gronn and Lacey's (2004) private and imagined '*positioning space*' rather than collaborative reflection, joint practice and discussion that might be possible through the creation of spaces across the boundaries of organizations.

Considering boundaries, spaces and genres as a framework for analysing the possibilities for workplace learning revealed some tensions between the ways that people were able to learn to lead, but did not necessarily indicate the types of leadership that might result from the learning. The privatised and individual mode of learning here seemed to mean that the practice in this school might comply with the expectations of the headteacher, but not necessarily be the practice of the learners in other situations. Indeed, the deputy head had commented that she was actively seeking to practise leadership differently in her next school. There were therefore a number of questions that could be asked about the communities of practice model in terms of learning within this school. In terms of leadership the headteacher and deputy were clearly experienced practitioners, but the other three CLs did not easily fit within the novice/apprenticeship model. Physical boundaries within the school

meant that there were few opportunities for working with, or discussions with, the more experienced leaders. The limited spaces available for the performance of leadership seemed to mean that some aspects of leadership undertaken by the headteacher would never be made available or even become visible to the wider leadership group. The centripetal role of the headteacher created boundaries around 'headship' as an area of practice, in terms of a community of practice of leadership the learning trajectories of the other leaders were limited. It seemed that in this school the possibilities for movement from the periphery to the centre would remain curtailed.

The incorporation of individual dispositions as an element of the communities of practice model is important (Evans et al. 2006), as the way that the learners conceptualized their opportunities to learn at work was significant in terms of their career planning, and the way that they moved from follower to leader in different situations. The research also concurs with Fuller et al. (2005) when they suggest that the role of 'teaching' in the workplace has insufficient attention from Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) in the development of the idea of legitimate peripheral participation. Here teaching through the genres of modelling and the instructional teacher was a major element in the way that learning at work was both understood and enacted. What was significant was the type of knowledge that the leaders of the school thought the staff (in particular the NQTs) needed to successfully undertake their roles, and for the school to succeed in its high pressure environment. Control of the 'teaching' element for adults learning at work through boundary closure and the use of particular genres was intended to ensure that all new staff quickly acquired a certain level of process knowledge that the headteacher perceived as necessary to deliver consistent results for the school.

The idea that *immersive* learning through direct instructions and modelling would be rapid, focussed and would impact on performance raised a question about the need for an organization (assessed by the headteacher) to feel safe, or confident, in the practical performance of her staff at a baseline level, an organizational version of Kahn's (2001) safe, holding environment for learners. Once this had occurred it was possible that more boundary crossing, creativity or innovation, conceived as higher risk activities, could take place. Expansive, boundary-crossing learning is therefore associated with risk for an organization where new and untried practices might threaten the performance of the school in an environment where performance is closely monitored. This idea has important implications for schools where there may be high staff turnover each year, and in this school there would again be four new staff starting in the autumn. Would establishing a consistent approach again take priority over boundary crossing activities? Whilst this has similarities with Engestrom's (2001) idea of generational change, the time frame is much shorter in terms of the '*cyclic rhythm*'. The power relationship between the established headteacher and the newcomers were such that the position of newcomers as followers and recipients, rather than contributors to knowledge, was firmly established.

### **8.1.1 A repertoire of genres structuring knowledge and scaffolding learning**

Applying the concept of boundaries to the repertoire of organizational genres in use in the school helped to add leverage to my understanding of the genres in use and the implications that each might have for learning. In section 2.24, I suggest that Bakhtin reminds us of the importance of the structuring elements of time and space, the '*historicity*' (Gutierrez 2008) of a genre in use. The genres of *instructional teacher* and *modelling teacher* both have long and specific associations with the

school classroom and teachers as professionals. These genres can be considered to be part of the professional language of teachers and have a strong, well established, place within the repertoire of genres within a school. Perhaps it was not surprising that these genres were readily available to draw upon outside the physical confines of the classroom and that pressures of time meant that they were readily drawn on as '*an institutionalized template*' (Yates and Orlikowski, 2002:15) in an attempt to facilitate both swift and effective communication between the leaders and fast immersive learning for all the adults in the school. The migration of these genres into the more composite genres of adult learning through INSET and the meeting genre for the leaders of the school structured the way in which these composite genres were organized in terms of time (forward-looking and oriented to school time) and the way that power was constructed within each of these genres as individualistic and centripetal (associated with the authority of the hierarchical leader/teacher).

The dominance of these two genres within the organizational repertoire structured not only the way that learning took place within the workplace but also the way that knowledge was embedded in these institutional practices. Kain (2005) suggests that the *instrumental*, *metacommunicative* and *social/political* aspects of genres can be examined to investigate how genres structure knowledge. Here much of the instrumental work of the genre repertoire seemed to be located around identifying the 'objects' of knowledge of the organization, the details of timetable, resources, planning, lesson structure, assessment practices etc that each teacher/leader needed to know in order to deliver the curriculum and organizational goals with consistency. The repertoire made tacit knowledge explicit, but at the level of practical and functional arrangements. Knowledge was also constructed as '*acquisition*' (Sfard 1998), something that could be passed on to new members, or something that, once instructed, the whole group would understand and act upon in

the same way. However, ultimately the choice of what was made explicit, or conveyed, lay within the power of the headteacher and the monologic and centripetal characteristics of the genre repertoire were significant here in restricting opportunities for others to add to, or challenge/discuss, the knowledge that might be conveyed.

Genres scaffold learning through their '*metacommunicative functions*' (Kain 2005), the forms that are chosen to convey the information/knowledge to others. The repertoire of genres here relied heavily on the familiar genres of *instruction* and *modelling*, and as I pointed out in chapters 6 and 7, the forms used to convey knowledge relied on the learner to uncritically replicate the words/actions/text being communicated. Discussion, rather than being reflective or connective of experience/practice to theory, took on the forward looking orientation of the *chrontopes* within these genres and was concerned with the practicalities of applying the given knowledge to the tasks ahead. Opportunities to discuss alternatives, diversity of approach or reflection on theory or policy were inhibited within these genres. Burnett (2006), discussing initial teacher education in schools suggests that teaching knowledge is seen as finite, technical, delivered to (rather than owned and developed by) teachers and presented as that needed to deliver the current curriculum (2006:321). She suggests that this is because teacher knowledge is '*increasingly defined by discourses of managerial professionalism*' (2006:321) and this did indeed seem to be the case here. For those learning to lead the organizational repertoire of genres meant that when taking INSET themselves the CLs and deputy head also took on the role of instructional leader and the role of delivering particular types of knowledge in these particular ways. The repertoire of genres did '*express social relationships, represent contexts and advance (or repress) particular social and political perspectives*' (Kain 2004:381), but because these institutional and secondary genres are experienced through the primary



genres of everyday life there was always some potential for the participants in the study to develop an evaluative note, even where this occurred privately.

### **8.1.2 Creating spaces for change in performance and talk**

The dominance of the instructional and modelling genres as modes of learning, the pressure of time and targets and the relative impermeability of the genre of institutional talk meant that it would be difficult for individuals to bring in new ideas or even make small changes in the way that the school was organized. Boundary crossing and transitions between roles required some permeability, spaces and genres of learning and talk within the school that allowed the discussion of new ideas and changes in behaviour by individuals. There were clear implications here for learning to lead through coaching and placements elsewhere (components of the NCSL leadership programme). It seemed that unless there was a close alignment between the way that any placement or coaches used institutional language and genres of learning then this lack of permeability meant that different ways of working would be resisted by a school with a tendency to close organization boundaries. Individuals might take up these development opportunities, but were likely to view this experience as private and external to school concerns. If more expansive learning was to take place spaces needed to be formed on both sides of the various boundaries that allowed a dialogue between ideas and a wider variety of genres of learning. Unless there was space for the expression of the primary genres (those of personal opinion, ideas accessed from elsewhere) it seemed likely that the dominant genres of institutional talk and instructional leadership would continue to shape the way in which learning took place within the school.

Gutiérrez (2008) suggests that an expansive learning environment has to provide a '*third space*'. For her this is a space for children's learning in the school system, but the general principle is no less appropriate here. In this third space learning needs

to be '*organized in ways in which conversation, dialogue, and examination of contradictions are privileged across learning activities with varied participation structures*' (2008:154). This third space is situated in particular ways locally, historically and temporally and Gutierrez uses this to generate an idea about collective third spaces as a place where repertoires of practice are moved across boundaries and may become transformed and/or transform the new environment. My view is that in order to create an expansive or third space the facility to express primary genres is crucial and this requires the conscious development of an open composite genre of institutional talk that allows this. Boundary crossing opportunities for teachers, as Evans et al. (2006) suggest, are important for providing more expansive learning environments, but, unless there are spaces on both sides of the boundary to allow people to examine their practice and the contradictions inherent within their work through dialogue, the act of boundary crossing can act as a mechanical device rather than an opportunity for expansive learning.

What might a 'third space' look like for those learning within organizations?

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003; 2005), discuss an established group of art teachers that go into one another's classrooms and '*spend most breaks and lunch-times together involved in discussions about problems and developments*' (Fuller et al. 2005:60). This draws on the space '*in-between*' identified by Solomon et al. (2006) discussed in section 2.31, and is a space in which primary genres can intermingle with institutional talk and where the authority embedded in the hierarchy of the school could be suspended. It is perhaps significant that this space is also one populated by 'experienced' teachers (with departmental control), perhaps secure in their knowledge of teaching practices and able to assess (and take) risks with new ways of working.

Not all individuals, however, might be willing to use their own time to further their workplace learning. An organizational provision of a third space might look slightly different. In this school it seemed to require the establishment of a bounded space, in terms of time and physical space, for the learners to interact together. This space also needed to be a safe space, in Kahn's terms, a '*holding environment*' (2001), where others can support exploration of difficulties, dilemmas and reflection on personal performance. Boundaries around such a space would need to resist the colonization of this space by the established organizational genres with their performative and forward looking characteristics, and allow a broad range of primary and secondary genres from elsewhere. Whilst it might be difficult for one primary school to provide such a space there would seem to be individual, local and national advantages to be gained for a group of primary schools that attempted to create such a space together.

## **8.2 Reflections, limitations and replications**

The study of workplace learning raises a number of problematic issues: how learning is defined by the researcher and the participants, how learning might be considered visible in the workplace, the relationship between learning and routine work and, in this study, the tensions between ideas about leadership, individual purpose, organizational and national requirements. I suggest in chapters 1 and 2 that taking a Bakhtinian approach to research added definition to my understanding of learning as socially constructed and situated. Locating the emergence of an individual's evaluative note through considering the framework of boundaries, spaces and genres available to them was certainly helpful. This approach also clarified the distinctions between my own position as a researcher and that of those leading in schools. Studying what happened to a small group of people in one school highlighted the concerns of the participants and what was striking was the marginality of the research concerns about learning to lead in terms of the everyday

work of the school. My connections as a researcher immersed in policy debates about the quality of leadership learning, the concerns about succession planning and the competing discourses of leadership (discussed in chapter 4) were very different from those working in this Primary School. These issues were not discussed within the school and whilst the various participants were aware (to various degrees) of these issues, researching learning to lead in the workplace was viewed as interesting (and with some curiosity) but as not particularly useful to the school.

There are always limitations and difficulties with a study, in particular where one researcher is trying to bring together individual and organizational perspectives. The main focus of this study was the formal leadership group within the school therefore those developing as informal leaders through the workplace, who might have made important contributions to discussion, were not encompassed within the research. Surfacing the topics of learning and leadership also proved difficult, and whilst the researcher-led interactions of the interviews and concept mapping were successful in achieving this, my observations and participation in the life of the school were crucial in the development of the final analytic framework. There were two aspects to this, first, it transpired that (with the exception of the headteacher) the participants either had not come across specific models of leadership or did not verbalize these in discussion about leadership. I asked about these terms only at the end of the research as it had not been my intention to introduce terms to the participants as this could potentially compromise the data. Apropos of this (and as I explain in section 1.4) to maintain the self-esteem of the learners I wanted to focus on what they did know and do rather than what they were not aware of. It also became clear fairly quickly that to comment about leadership was, for three of the participants, a comment about the headteacher due her strong style and their very limited teaching experience. Describing leadership was therefore a sensitive issue in this school and

there is certainly a question about whether the silence about leadership in this school was a consequence of leadership style in itself or the combination of a performative workplace and the lack of exposure to alternative models of leadership for the participants.

Representing the participants' voices in this final text was also a challenge as the analysis inevitably reflects my own interpretation of the dialogic exchanges that took place during the year. Including the participant generated maps, extended extracts from the interviews and observations and a range of comments from discussions over the year attempts to give space to the participants' voices. The attempt to fully represent the voices in order for the reader to enter into a dialogic encounter with the participants was only partly successful. The importance of silence in the dialogue, and my continual voice as analyst, proved to be significant aspects that influenced the final text. I did try to include the participants views throughout the research, respondent feedback during the group discussion and in later interviews contributed to the research, specifically confirming that modelling and time boundaries were significant features within the school. As I noted in the introduction, the responsibility for the final analysis remains that of the researcher.

On a personal level several of the participants expressed appreciation for the time to discuss/reflect on their learning and career with me (Nias 1991 and others), but again this was a private issue rather than a school development issue. Robson (2002) suggests that research should engage with the explicit concerns of the '*real world*' participants, but the privatization of learning was not expressed as a concern by the participants of my study. How, then, has this study made a contribution? I suggest that there are two elements here, those relating to the educational leadership and those relating to the study of workplace learning more generally.

Firstly, the study adds to the cumulative tradition of ethnographic studies of schools that gives a detailed account of the nature of the school as an adult workplace in the C21<sup>st</sup> as accountable, performative and target-driven with little room for discussion and reflective practice. This supports recent findings by Ball (2003), Bottery (2007) and Jeffrey and Woods (2003). Observational accounts of the school as an adult workplace are far fewer in number than studies which rely on interviews alone and offer a different perspective. This study attempts to provide a rich source of data about respondents' perspectives on a topic that is not often explored from this angle. In particular this account highlights the issue of physical, time and social boundaries as shaping influences for the workplace and the learning that takes place there.

Empirical findings also point to the questions that can be raised about the relationship with NCSL for teachers learning to be leaders. Whilst taking up training opportunities offered by the NCSL the participants of the study engaged in this as a personal development issue and there seemed little engagement or debate with the issues raised about leadership within the school. This raises a question about the way that national policies aiming to change approaches to school leadership can be implemented through the NCSL training and qualification programmes. Discussion about models of leadership, extended schools and collaborative ways of working were notably absent from this school.

Secondly, in relation to workplace learning, this study builds on the concept of boundary crossing as facilitating expansive learning for individuals and organizations. By offering a detailed examination of the boundaries in play, it became clear that movement (identified as across boundaries or as transitions between roles) was insufficient in itself to provide expansive learning opportunities leading to a change in practice or discussion. Spaces, both physical and discursive, were required on both sides of the boundary in order for new ideas to be expressed and new performance repertoires of leadership to be tried out.

Using Bakhtin's concept of genres, together with Miller's notion of genres as social action, was useful in order to examine the genres of leadership and learning in play within the organization and to identify where composite genres existed and the possibilities for the expression of alternative views. Composite genres in this school were composed of genres migrating *within* the school rather than allowing access to the primary genres of personal opinion or reflection that might have been instigated by external ideas. Because these genres were tightly linked to the authority of the headteacher and the hierarchical structure of the school they were essentially monologic and did not allow the voicing of alternative ideas. For expansive learning to occur it seems necessary that composite genres need to have open boundaries in order to facilitate discussion and learning that can impact upon the organization. This supports, and adds theoretical detail to Evans' et al. (2006) discussion of expansive learning dimensions, and understanding genres as structuring and scaffolding knowledge offers a way to connect theories of knowledge to theories of learning in the workplace.

It was not possible to judge the restrictive-expansive nature of the learning environment for the school prior to the study. To fully explore the relationship between boundary crossing and composite genres as facilitating expansive learning a second study of a school at the expansive end of the restrictive-expansive continuum is required. This would allow a closer look at the nature of a composite genre that mixes primary speech and institutional talk and follow through how ideas related to leadership are integrated and taken up in a school over time. As the relationship between boundary crossing and genres of talk is not confined to schools, further work could explore how these components of an expansive learning environment operate in different organizations, and those of different sizes.

The idea of repeating the study raises the issue of replication, as Bryman (2004) points out, rarely attempted in ethnographic studies. I think that replication of the study is possible through a focus on the conceptual framework of boundaries, spaces and genres. By gathering detailed information about the movement of people, the training programmes attended, the opportunities for interaction and the types of interaction that take place a similar assessment could be made of a different organization. Whilst the people, issues, focus of learning and environment would be different, the possibilities for assessing an environment for learning through the repertoire of genres in use and along the expansive-restrictive continuum could remain consistent.

This thesis examined learning at work for five leaders in an English primary school. Despite national initiatives I found that the way that learning to lead took place was dominated by the local environment and that the impact within the school of national leadership programmes was limited. Learning, and engagement with debates about school leadership, was largely an individual enterprise, privatized and taking place in a learner's own time. Where learning was an explicit activity within the school it was firmly related to the concerns of the headteacher and oriented towards the local environment (external and internal). Any possibility of developing the organizational repertoire to include a wider variety of genres of learning, those open to external influences, seemed to rely on the headteacher changing her perception of the vulnerability and risk associated with opening the boundaries around and within the school. Ultimately, the power of the headteacher shaped not only *what* might be made explicit for others to learn in the workplace, but also the *way* that learning could take place through the high value given to particular genres of learning within the school.



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## **Appendices**

## Appendix A

### Letter to Participants and Consent Form

Ref U800 C3

September 2006

Dear

**Constructing Understandings of educational Leadership: how leaders learn through shaping and crossing boundaries.**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project. I wish to reassure you about a few points concerning the information that may be gathered during the project, and how your identity as a participant will be protected under the Data Protection Act 1998.

The identities of individuals and the organization will be changed in the final report, and data stored using a numerical system. The personal data that will be held may include your contributions to the meetings, interview recordings and transcriptions, observation notes and references to documents within the organization, for example records of training attended. As an participant you are entitled to see the transcript of any audio-recording, and I will provide this on request.

The information held will be used for research purposes only, and access to the full information will be limited to those directly involved in the research project as researchers. All data records will be destroyed after October 2011.

Extracts from the data may be used in the research report and, possibly, subsequent publications. Any extracts will be anonymous and the identity of any participants protected.

The data for the project will be held by [A.E.Pegg@Open.ac.uk](mailto:A.E.Pegg@Open.ac.uk)

The data co-ordinator for the project is Hugh Balhatchet available at -  
[h.n.balhatchet@open.ac.uk](mailto:h.n.balhatchet@open.ac.uk)

Thank you for your assistance.

Ann Pegg

Postgraduate Researcher - FELS

## The Faculty of Education & Language Studies

Constructing Understandings of Educational Leadership: how  
leaders learn through shaping and crossing boundaries

### *Agreement to Participate*

I,  (Print name)

Agree to take part in this research project.

I have had the purposes of the research explained to me.

I have been informed that I may refuse to participate at any point by simply saying so.

I have been assured that my confidentiality will be protected as specified in the letter/leaflet.

I agree that the information that I provide can be used for educational or research purposes, including publication.

I understand that if I have any concerns I can contact:

Ann Pegg

at:

Faculty of Education & Language  
Studies  
The Open University  
Stuart Hall Building (Floor 2)  
Walton Hall Milton Keynes MK7 6AA

If I wish to complain about any  
aspect of my participation in  
this project, I can contact the  
Director of CREET at:

Centre for Research in Education &  
Educational Technology (CREET)  
**The Open University**  
**Stuart Hall Building (Ground Floor)**  
**Walton Hall**  
**Milton Keynes MK7 6AA**

**I assign the copyright for my contribution to the Faculty for use in  
education, research and publication.**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

### **Interview Structure**

The interviews were loosely structured around three sections, career, roles and responsibilities and concept mapping. The whole of the interview was recorded, including the concept mapping process. Participants commented on their maps as they created them and I asked questions that were intended to probe and clarify the concepts written down, if this had not already been covered in the earlier part of the interview.

#### **Career section :**

*How did you come to be working as a curriculum leader in this school?*

Prompts – when qualified, previous posts/schools, previous experiences, current responsibilities,

*What are your future career plans?*

Prompts – aiming for headship or other senior posts, remaining in the classroom, thinking about moving school as a career progression, any current or planned future training programmes,

#### **Role and leadership**

*Can you describe your current leadership role and how you see your leadership?*

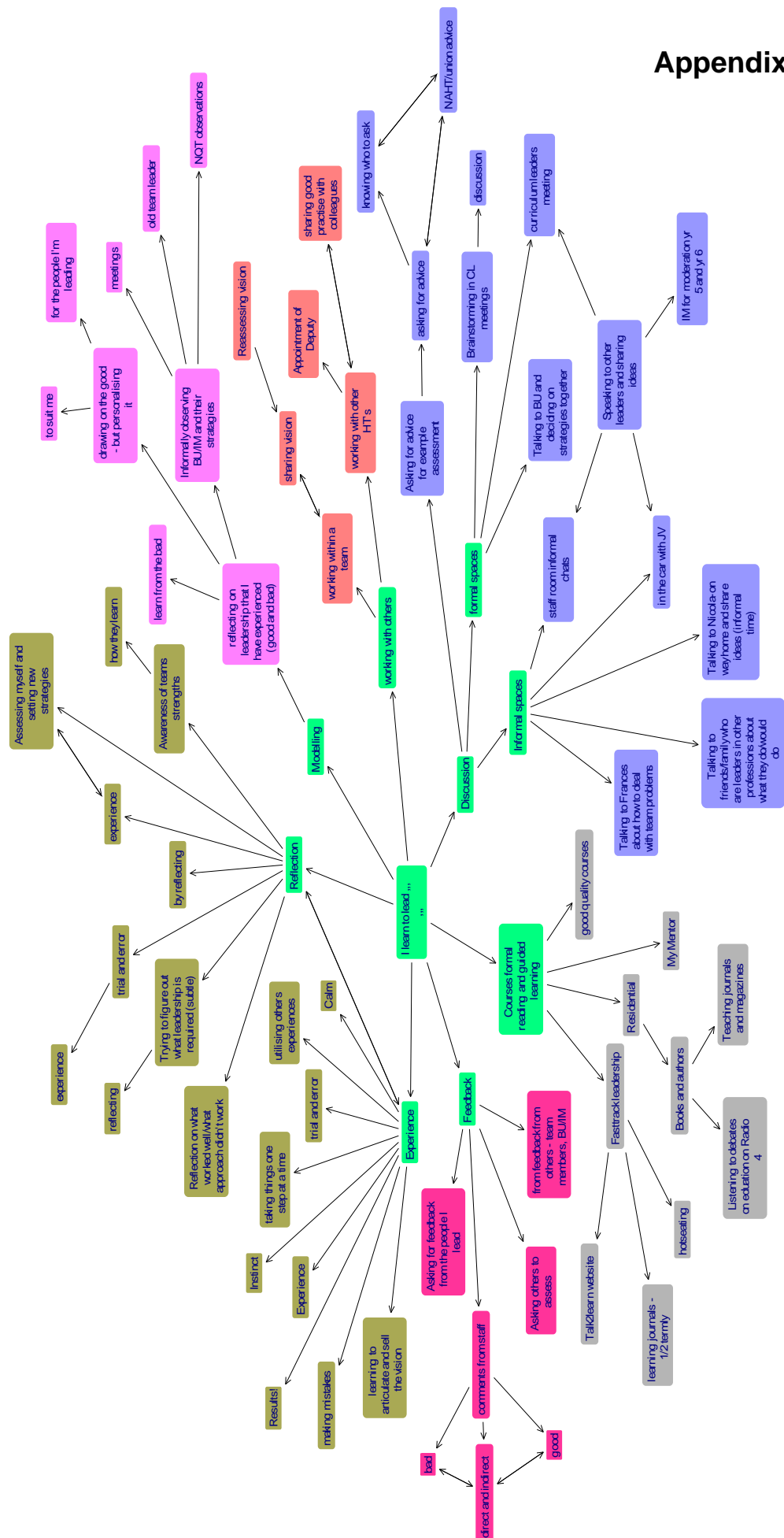
Prompts – title of post, how long in post, what does this involve, how many people responsible for, what areas of work covered, how does she work with team members, how does this relate to SMT in school, how is leadership described..

#### **Concept mapping**

Explain what this is and introduce the prime descriptors for each map. Start with

‘I lead when I....’ and follow with ‘I learn to lead when/by...’

## Appendix C



## Appendix D

### INSET Timetable - Term 1

Autumn Term 2006

15 school weeks

	MOND	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
4 <sup>th</sup> Sept	SDD	SDD	Yrs 3 and 4 start	Yrs 5 and 6 start	
11 <sup>th</sup> Sept	INSET - ICT		INSET – child protection training	Consultant to BU	
18 <sup>th</sup> Sept	INSET- ICT	Team Meetings	INSET – research Teams	Ofsted training for Govs 7-gpm	Prospectus issued
25 <sup>th</sup> Sept	INSET - ICT	Team Meetings	INSET – Maths (IM)		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Oct		Team Meetings	INSET – Speaking and Listening	Year 5 – trip Prospective Parents 6 – 8.00 (all staff)	
9 <sup>th</sup> Oct	INSET- ICT Tyre park installed	Team Meetings Govs CC 4pm	INSET – Subject Teams Govs PPF 7pm		Pm – school photos
16 <sup>th</sup> Oct	INSET - ICT	Team Meetings		Parents Evening 4 – 7 pm	Theatre for all Am – Scrooge Parents invited in pm
30 <sup>th</sup> Oct	INSET - ICT	Team Meetings	INSET		Signpost assembly Govs in for lunch. Clerked Govs pm
6 <sup>th</sup> Nov	INSET - ICT	Team Meetings	INSET – LED week – team		
13 <sup>th</sup> Nov	INSET - ICT	Team Meetings	INSET-writing team		
20 <sup>th</sup> Nov		Team Meetings	INSET – research teams		
27 <sup>th</sup> Nov		Team Meetings	INSET – Expand your mind week – Shakespeare Theatre for yr 6		
4 <sup>th</sup> Nov	INSET - ICT	Team Meetings	INSET – reading team		Signpost assembly - pm
11 <sup>th</sup> Nov		Team Meetings	INSET general (BU and IM)		Reports issued
18 <sup>th</sup> Dec	School carol concert	Class Assemblies	Class Assemblies		

Note: original error in dates (December)

## Appendix E

### Directed Time

#### PEONY HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### DIRECTEDTIME 2006 -2007

Under the Teachers Pay and Conditions Act (1987) teachers are required 'to perform such duties at such times and places as may be specified by the Headteacher for 1265 hours in any year.'

It is still clearly the case that many teachers are undertaking work related to school in excess of these hours. However, in accordance with the requirements of this Act, and to help clarify directed and non-directed time, the following has been agreed in consultation with the staff.

		Hours
Daily not including lunchtime	8.45-12.30 and 1.25-3.10 5.5 hours per day =27.5 hours a Week 27.5 x 38 weeks	1045
Pre/post school day_on premises	8.30 - 8.45 = 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> hours weekly 3.10 - 3.25 x 3 = 45 mins x 38	47.5 28.5
Team Meetings/ INSET/Prof meetings	34 x team Meetings - Tues 34 x INSET –Wed 20 x ICT INSET – Mon	88
Morning Meeting	8.20 - 8.30 x 36	6
INSET Days	4 hours x 5.5 There are 5 SDD days each year - one will be time in lieu of evening meetings	22
Parents Evening	Eng/Maths 6 hours x 1 Class Teacher 3 x 3 hours Prospective Parents meetings 2 hours x 2	6 9 4
School Events		3
Contingency		6
	<u>Total</u>	<u>1265</u>



## **TERM DATES FOR 2006 - 2007**

Autumn Term - Staff training days: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> Sept Wed  
6<sup>th</sup> Sept to Fri 20<sup>th</sup> Oct  
Mon 30<sup>th</sup> Oct to Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> Dec

Spring Term - Staff training days: Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March - (time in lieu)  
Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Jan to Thurs 8<sup>th</sup> Feb  
Mon 19<sup>th</sup> Feb to Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> Mar

Summer Term - Staff training days: 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> June  
Mon 16<sup>th</sup> April to Fri 25<sup>th</sup> May  
Wed 6<sup>th</sup> June to Fri 20<sup>th</sup> July

